

**A Qualitative Case Study on Examining Transformational Leadership Behaviors and
Employee Commitment**

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Abstract

Transformational leaders are an essential asset for organizational change because transformational leaders have been linked to successful business innovativeness. However, employees influence the achievement levels, as organizational changes are significant in the peculiarities of their work routines. The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by a lack of transformational leadership when implementing change. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The theoretical framework that guided this research study was transformational leadership theory, which distinguishes leaders who have strong motivational relationships with their subordinates and encourage them to accomplish desired results driven by innovations. The research methodology involved a qualitative case study design, with data collected through semi structured interviews with 18 participants from various healthcare organizations. The study identified seven themes and 13 subthemes from the three research questions. The three research questions translated the problem into specific queries to help identify issues related to employee commitment and resistance to change. The research questions were RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals? RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals? RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees? The three themes that were determined to increase employee commitment were communication, collaboration in decision-making process, and motivation. The two themes that were identified to

improve employee commitment were leaders who serve as a role model during the change process and employee involvement in the change process. The final two themes identified for healthcare leaders to drive the change process were inspiring employees throughout the change process and preparing employees for change. The findings of this study suggested recommendations for practice. A recommendation for practice is for leaders to apply transformational leadership theory while implementing organizational changes. Another recommendation for leaders is to follow each step of Kurt Lewin's Change model to understand organizational change behavior. A recommendation for future research is to examine how communication impacts the change process within healthcare organizations. A strong positive correlation aligns with the existing literature, which showed that transformational leaders drive the success of organizational change and commitment by communicating a clear vision of organizational goals. There was also a strong correlation between transformational leadership and individual performance and innovative behavior, which influences employee commitment to change.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Transformational leaders are an essential asset for organizational change because transformational leaders have been linked to successful business innovativeness (Bjekić et al., 2019). Bjekić et al. (2019) suggested that well-qualified leaders are valuable in attaining an organization's goals and objectives. However, employees influence the achievement levels, as organizational changes are significant in the peculiarities of their work routines (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). According to Heim and Sardar-Drenda (2021), accomplishing organizational goals requires a stable environment for implementing change and innovations. Organizational achievement also depends on commitment to change, positive employee attitude toward job changes, and change readiness, as transformational leadership has been linked to those constructs and employee supportive behavior (Faupel & Süß, 2019). An example of supportive behavior is trust during the implementation of change when the positive outcome of commitment to change requires a leader and employee to build a relationship on trust (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021).

Research on employee trust from an authentic leadership perspective has found that trust in organizational leaders is significant in change readiness (Islam et al., 2021; Xiong et al., 2016). Trust in leadership is associated with employee outcomes, which impacts employee commitment to organizational change and conditions (Islam et al., 2021; Xiong et al., 2016). Transformational leaders and employee commitment are also significant during change initiatives because positive individual and transformational leadership behavior aid successful organizational changes (Islam et al., 2021). However, when employees lack trust in leadership, it creates resistance because trust in management plays a significant role in the achievement or failure of change initiatives (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Yuan et al.

(2022) discovered that transformational leadership positively contributes to effective commitment and that trust in leadership facilitates a relationship between employee commitment and transformational leadership. Examining the effects of organizational change on an organizational and individual level helped to determine a link between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

The significance of the transformational leadership theory is the leader's capability to inspire the employees to achieve organizational outcomes by going beyond expectations to accomplish tasks (Zhao et al., 2021). Transformational leadership theory has gained theoretical importance in organizational leadership from James MacGregor Burns, who developed the transformational leadership theory in 1973 (Burns, 1978). Other theorists, such as Bernard Bass, later enhanced the theory later in 1985 to describe the psychological mechanisms that leaders employ (Bass & Bass, 2009). The transformational leadership theory provides a theoretical framework for assessing individual and organizational outcomes. Transformational leadership theory suggests that transformational leaders motivate employees to attain more by focusing on the follower's values and supporting them by aligning their principles with the organization's standards (Burns, 1978). The theory also relates transformational leadership as a partnership in which organizational leaders and employees inspire each other to higher standards. The concept of the theory results in congruence to a value system between the leader and the employee during organizational change (Burns, 1978).

Employee attitudes toward change are critical for transformational efforts because adjusting to new organizational goals and transitioning to unfamiliar responsibilities can create resistance for change recipients (Moutousi & May, 2018). The introduction of the term

resistance to change was recognized by Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1947). The term emerged in the first stage of Lewin's three-stage change model, which was the unfreezing stage, indicating the use of additional influences to break social habits and resistance to change (Burnes, 2020). Resistance has been exhibited as a need for more understanding of the proposed transformation and trust in business organizations (Beasley et al., 2021). Coch and French (1948) recognized earlier research on resistance in the late 1940s, which provided a foundation for understanding change resistance and readiness (Burnes, 2020). The concept of change readiness informs scholars of the challenges of successful organizational change without proper knowledge and skills (Beer, 2021). Repovs et al. (2019) presented the same phenomenon by stating that change resistance is one of the most notable cited causes of organizations failing to implement change. The concept of change readiness represents a foundation for behaviors such as resistance to change efforts on an individual level (Repovs et al., 2019). Positive attitudes of organizational changes have been labeled as readiness for change. In contrast, the negative attitudes of organizational change have been labeled as resistance to change.

Positive leadership behavior, such as transformational leadership, has gradually improved resistance by indicating malleability in the employee's behavior. Employees with a positive perspective about organizational changes are more likely to believe they have support from their leaders and are more likely to believe that successful implementation is achievable. Transformational leadership is helpful when implementing successful change because its leadership style cultivates a positive approach to organizational change among employees (Gigliotti et al., 2019). In the context of organizational change, employee attitude significantly depends on transformational leadership behaviors because of their focus on stimulating and

inspiring employees to commit to change through compelling visions of the future (Henricks et al., 2020). However, leaders who do not exhibit transformational leadership cause negative attitudes toward change, such as resistance due to the lack of capacity to properly prepare their employees for change readiness (Oreg, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by a lack of transformational leadership when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). A few causes of resistance to change include misunderstanding implementations of change and doubt in the managerial capacity to implement change (Besliu, 2018). Organizations initiate change by implementing new strategies and adjusting employment procedures (Islam et al., 2021). However, many organizations need help to reach their objectives when implementing change, and leaders have shifted the dynamics of successful change (Ramos et al., 2022). Although factors such as slow production of industrialization and automation contribute to reducing achievement levels of organizational change, followers significantly impact the change process, as organizational changes play a significant role in the variations of their work routines (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Individual behavior and motivational factors are critical to the success of organizational changes. If transformational changes are not understood individually, it affects an organization entirely (Faupel & Süß, 2019). The process must be well-established and implemented according to an existing situation-based methodology for change to be advantageous at the organizational and individual levels.

A relationship between organizational behaviors and employee commitment in organizational change indicates that committed employees are more accountable and dedicated

to the organization. Commitment is connected to employees' engagement and devotion toward the organization and their intentions to be valued (Park et al., 2022). Employees who are satisfied with their leaders and value them engage more in their organizations during challenging times. *Employee commitment* has been defined as an employee's involvement with organizational development (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Employee commitment is essential because dedicated staff have less intent to resign, are more visible, and are highly driven to perform at an advanced level. Employees who distrust their leaders are less likely to achieve goal objectives when change occurs (Yuan et al., 2022). Change can be examined from various perceptions and include organizational or individual effects in the essence of organizational achievements (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). A consequence of not demonstrating transformational leadership during an organizational change may cause change resistance, resulting in opposition to transformation efforts, which can lead to increased staff turnover rates (Axelrad & Yirmiyahu, 2022; Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. Effective transformational change and employee commitment increase employee openness to innovations and mitigate resistance to avoid change (Peng et al., 2021). According to Engida et al. (2022), some challenges organizations experience are a lack of leadership capacity during change implementation and employee change resistance. Transformational leaders who understand when to facilitate the change efforts are more prone to boost employee acceptance. The relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment and organizational change

behaviors was logical for this study because resistance toward change hinders employee commitment during change implementation in the workplace (Oreg, 2018). As reviewed in a meta-analysis, transformational leadership behavior is associated with individual-level performance among employees (Henricks et al., 2020). Employee attitudes critically depend on transformational leadership behaviors, especially when empowering employees to embrace new work practices and challenging the status quo.

The population for this research included healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. *Purposive sampling* is a non-probability sampling method used to select participants with distinctive experiences associated with the research questions (Bullard, 2023). The purposive sampling technique helped identify and recruit participants who provided rich data to enhance the research findings. Creswell and Creswell (2017) noted that qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to unfold new information to support the study. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) denote that 20 – 40 interviews are enough to reach saturation with an average sample size of 45. The sample size for this qualitative study consisted of 18 individual interviews. The eligibility requirement for the leader group included a) participants must be 18 years or older, b) must work in a healthcare organization in North Carolina, c) must have supervisory experience for five or more employees, and d) must be in a leadership role for at least 6 months. The eligibility requirement for the employee group included a) participants must be 18 years or older and b) must be employed with the company for at least 6 months. Participants were recruited from two healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The participants were compensated with a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon for participating in the study.

Data were collected by conducting individual interviews and using a demographic questionnaire to measure transformational leadership behaviors and readiness for organizational change. The demographic information included the participant's age, years of experience working at the organization, and level of education. The demographic questionnaire identified the four distinct components of transformational leadership using Qualtrics software. Qualtrics is a web-based tool designed to format data, distribute surveys, and analyze participant responses (Molnar, 2019). The participants completed the questionnaires before the interview because the responses helped structure the interviews.

This research analyzed leadership practices among business leaders and employee behaviors within the healthcare industry. The research was conducted with structured interviews and a demographic questionnaire to collect data. Individual interviews and questionnaires were logical because both methods included open-ended questions to help examine transformational leadership, employee commitment and organizational behaviors. In this case, a questionnaire and interviews were appropriate for conducting the research because personal encounters with a phenomenon are typically identified through open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews to avoid vague responses that require probing (Afolayan & Oniyinde, 2019). The interview protocols were designed to gather extensive, detailed information from participants. The individual interviews were approximately 30 minutes for each participant (Siedlecki, 2022). There was a script to follow to allow the participants to share their experiences and to avoid providing any possible biases from personal beliefs and opinions. The interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams.

After the data collection process, the data were analyzed and coded in NVivo software. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software used to develop and enhance theories using

interview data (Dalkin et al., 2021). The data was coded through NVivo software and compared to related themes on the challenges organizations faced during change efforts and employee resistance to changes. A thematic analysis was used to describe how transformational leaders influence employee commitment to organizational change. The research focused on the strategies of transformational leaders and how they inspire their employees to commit to organizational change (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Introduction to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study was transformational leadership. James MacGregor Burns (1978) initially created the theory of transforming leadership in his explanatory study on political leaders, but the concept is now applied in organizational psychology research. Burns described the process of transforming leadership as a procedure in which leaders and followers raise each other to a higher degree of morale and motivation (Roberts, 1985). The concept of the theory is that once followers are inspired by their leaders, they are encouraged to change their perceptions and expectations to a higher morality. Burns (1978) seminal work in his book *Leadership* includes a complete examination of transformational leadership and the relationship with followers. Burns established the transformational leadership theory to determine a relationship between leaders and followers using four components: intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influences, and inspirational motivation (Bass, 1999). The theory suggests that the leaders' strength and vision inspire followers.

The first key component of Burns (1978) seminal work is *intellectual stimulation* which describes leaders as encouraging their members to be innovative. Transformational leaders encourage innovations that stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by including

members in decision-making to improve the organization's overall success. *Individualized consideration* is the second component of the transformational leadership theory, in which the leader focuses on the follower's needs and how they impact the overall goal. Transformational leaders use individual considerations to recognize the desires that drive followers and use those motivations to provide growth opportunities. The next component, *idealized influences*, is described by Burns as a charismatic leader who actively listens to followers and unites them toward a shared vision. Leaders with charisma provide constructive feedback to each member and take accountability when misfortunes occur. Burns explained the last component of the theory as *inspirational motivation*, in which a leader can inspire followers to commit to a vision by fostering a sense of purpose (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders use inspiration and motivation to achieve future goals and foresee obstacles that can potentially hinder the organization's vision.

The concepts of the transformational leadership theory aligned with the research because the theory describe leaders as those who create positive change to enhance the followers' morale, performance, and motivation (Stewart, 2006). The theory forms perceptions and values that followers of transformational leaders are willing to go beyond the call of duty because of their loyalty to and trust in their leaders. The followers are inspired to perform at a high level because transformational leaders present followers with an inspirational mission beyond self-identity. The theory's key concepts were relevant to this study because transforming leaders are idealized for having moral standards for working towards the goal of successful organizational change (Bass, 1999). Transformational leadership theory aligns with the research study in ways that support the problem that leaders who do not demonstrate transformational leadership create

resistance and decrease employee commitment when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021).

Transformational leadership theory reveals that transformational leaders influence their followers to fulfill organizational goals through creativity and innovations (Farahdiba et al., 2022). The transformational leadership theory improves the issue of change resistance by providing concepts such as intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation for leaders to employ as a guide to inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Bass et al. (2003) tested the hypothesized relationships between transformational leadership and followership, which supported that the transformational leadership theory positively correlates with achieved business goals (Bass et al., 2003). Leaders who support their followers notice affective commitment during organizational change efforts (Wang, 2022). The hypothesis proved that members of transformational leaders develop positive change behaviors in tasks assigned to them, which results in increased commitment during organizational change efforts.

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

Qualitative research has made a notable imprint as a practical methodology in business research by allowing researchers to study distinct themes to explain business practices within organizational contexts (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Qualitative research is used for experimental purposes to describe certain phenomena and answer questions related to social experiences (Mulisa, 2021). Qualitative inquiry adopts different lenses of social life to discover new cognitions and views about the issues of world realities. Qualitative research helps scholars explain worldview assumptions to understand the nature of the study. Qualitative research aims to examine the worldview from an interpretive approach by using data collection such as interviews and questionnaires to support the views of issues prompted

by participants (Billups, 2021). Interviews and questionnaires are essential for conducting qualitative research and collecting data in business research involving specific themes for organizational development.

Individual interviews and questionnaires were appropriate because both approaches presented a precise examination to help understand the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment, and organizational change behaviors. Using interviews helped determine the effect of transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Shofiyuddin et al., 2021). Data collection methods used in the research consisted of a demographic questionnaire to measure commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The demographic questionnaires and individual interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of how resistance and decreased employee commitment exists when leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership. Questionnaires and interviews are data collection methods that guide case studies by analyzing key topics of how particular events impact employees.

Case study designs are valuable when studying scientific theories involving real-world phenomena. According to Hancock et al. (2021), case studies provide an in-depth examination of a suggested population of a distinct concern within a designated setting. The empirical nature of the case study design introduced merging themes to the problem concerning change resistance and decreased employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The participants provided insight from their encounters with resistance to change and how organizational changes played a significant role in the variations of their work routines. The exploratory case study was the selected approach because the design explained the occurrences of phenomena

by focusing on the how and why of the decision-making process (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The exploratory case study explores situations and answers the “what,” “why,” and “how” questions in the research study (Pathirana et al., 2020).

Research Questions

The research questions reveal the purpose of the study in terms of inquiries addressed by the research. Research questions help address the problem statement and fulfill the purpose of the research study. The research questions must align with the purpose of the study and the problem statement in both phrases and content. According to Tomaszewski et al. (2020), research questions require the appropriate qualitative approach for collecting and analyzing data to resolve the research problem. Research questions translate the problem into a specific query to help indicate what issues must be resolved. The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1

How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ2

How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ3

What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

Significance of the Study

A significant role of transformational leaders is to guide employees toward reaching a collective vision by shaping work attitudes and behaviors which is impactful on an individual level. Some impactful significances that transformational leaders have in the field of organizational development include affective commitment, innovative behavior, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (ElKordy, 2022). Examining transformational leadership and employee commitment was significant because the research will help current and future leaders understand the practical importance of transformational change and how to support employees during change efforts to avoid resistance. Transformational leadership has been linked to individual performance and innovative behavior which influences employee commitment to change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Wang, 2022). As a result, transformational leaders effectively accomplish business goals and visions by exhibiting intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized outcomes.

Examining transformational leadership will help current and future leaders align their skills with organizational goals and values so that their influence will guide their followers on a path to successful organizational development. Ling-Hui Yang (2022) posited the same notion by indicating that leaders impact the organization's success by inspiring followers to achieve goals through continuous development. Leadership plays a role in organizational development to encourage and motivate followers to change for the organization to remain sustainable and adaptable to the business environment. The significance of transformational leadership is essential to applied research because transformational leaders understand their impact on innovative behaviors as it relates to organizational development (Lim & Moon, 2021). If this study was not conducted, leaders will continue to create resistance at the individual level,

resulting in decreased employee commitment. This study provided insight into how leaders can attain organizational goals by improving employee commitment to shaping employee behaviors during change processes.

Definitions of Key Terms

Change Resistance

Resistance to change is defined as an adverse individual orientation concerning change and is perceived as an obstacle to effective improvement and adaptation (Oreg, 2003).

Employee commitment

Employee commitment is defined as a form of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors that influence the individual performance of employees (Shuck et al., 2011).

Healthcare Organizations

Healthcare organizations are defined as a healthcare system providing healthcare services for residents, communities, or markets (Ecqi, 2023).

Organizational Change

Organizational change denotes planned or unplanned changes in an organizational structure, or the individuals associated with the organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2018).

Transformational Change

Transformational change is defined as strategic changes that impact the sustainability of business development in targeted markets and systems (Feinstein, 2019).

Summary

Positive transformational leadership and employee behavior are significant for organizational development because positive initiatives aid successful organizational changes. However, leaders should demonstrate transformational leadership during the organizational change to avoid adverse employee behaviors such as resistance (Oreg, 2018). This study examined the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. This qualitative case study used individual interviews and a demographic questionnaire to support existing theories and determine how resistance and decreased employee commitment exist when leaders do not exhibit transformational leadership. This research study provided an understanding of how leaders can achieve organizational goals by improving employee behaviors during change processes. Chapter 2 explains why the transformational leadership theory's key concepts are relevant to this study. The next chapter also includes an in-depth literature review that thoroughly examines transformational leadership, organizational change, employee commitment, and healthcare organizations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by a lack of transformational leadership when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. Transformational leadership is a leader's ability to elevate others by motivating them and building their confidence to function beyond the expectations within the job responsibilities (Saira et al., 2021). Transformational leaders stimulate high performance by acknowledging their follower's true potential, forming supportive relationships, and increasing employee commitment. Organizational behaviors such as change readiness and acceptance to change are supportive behaviors that positively impact employee commitment to organizational change. Change efforts are more effective for leaders when followers positively engage with change initiatives.

The relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment affects employees' work performance (Eliyana et al., 2019). Individuals with a high level of commitment show positive behavior toward organizational changes rather than resistance toward change. Jun and Lee (2023) introduced followers' commitment to change as the link between transformational leadership and the support of innovative behavior. Leaders who support their followers influence individual behaviors like commitment because supportive behaviors develop trust and encourage creativity during organizational change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021; Jun & Lee, 2023). Employees who feel that their leaders support them exhibit high levels of affective commitment and other attitudinal outcomes. There were several subtopics in the literature that

was discussed in this study which included *transformational leader*, *transformational change*, *employee commitment*, *employee resistance*, and *organizational change behavior*.

There were several search engines used, and databases accessed to conduct the research for this study. The scholarly databases used include Academia, EBSCOhost, (NU) Library, ProQuest, SAGE Journals Online, Science Direct, National University, and google scholar. The following search terms and combinations were used to conduct the literature search for this study: Transformational leadership, organizational change, employee commitment, employee resistance to change, change readiness, transformational leadership theory, servant leadership, ethical leadership, pseudo-transformational leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leader behavior, organizational change management, types of employee commitment, cause of employee resistance, communication, employee turnover, assessing change readiness, and leadership and employee engagement. The research used for this study ranged from 2003–2024 with much of the literature stemming from 2017–2024. Literature researched for the theoretical framework dated back to 1947. The types of literature used were peer-reviewed articles, journals, and websites.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this research study was transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership was initially introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. According to Burns, the main foundation of the transformational leadership theory is the leader's ability to encourage their followers to achieve beyond what is expected in a fast-changing business environment (Krishnan, 2005). Burns created the transformational leadership theory to explain how transformational leaders inspire their followers in a way that encourages them to navigate innovations by going beyond the call of duty (Givens, 2008). The

transformational leadership theory distinguishes leaders who create new perspectives and have strong motivational relationships with their subordinates to accomplish desired results driven by innovations (Roberts, 1985). Transformational leadership theory has captured the attention of many scholars in literature on organizational leadership over the last few decades. Reza (2019) used components of transformational leadership theory to analyze top corporate transformational leaders based on their leadership skills. The results from the study determined that corporate transformational leaders were consistent with the visions and values of their subordinates which developed high levels of job satisfaction and performance. Dionne (2016) posits a similar notion by revealing that leaders who display transformational leadership practices improve team performance and goal achievement levels. Krishnan (2002) corroborates with Burns's idea that transformational leaders focus on value systems by helping them align their principles with the organization's goals. Furthermore, Burns classified transformational leadership as a connection between the leader and the follower that motivates each other to higher levels (Burns, 1978).

After Burns (1978) proposed the transformational leadership concept, his notion continued influencing how people perceived and applied the theory. Influential leaders are transformational in a way that serves as an autonomous influence in transforming the disposition of the follower's motivation (Burns, 1978). In the decades following Burns theory of transformational leaders, researchers aimed to develop, evolve, and empirically authenticate the theory into an extensively researched leadership paradigm. Two decades later, the transformational leadership theory was later enhanced by Bernard M. Bass who expanded Burns original ideas of transformational leadership (Bass, 1999). According to Bass, transformational leaders are defined based on their impact on followers. Most notable for the evolution of transformational leadership theory, Bernard Bass and others have clarified that (a) leadership

behaviors that encourage transformation; (b) how leaders motivate followers to change; and (c) the outcomes of transformational change influenced by leader-follower relationships (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Riggio, 2010).

Bass (1999) also defined the dimensions of transformational leadership in four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders should lead by example because employees view their superiors as role models. Idealized influences are role model leaders with extraordinary capabilities who model high principles of ethical conduct (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). Leaders who have idealized influences focus closely on the needs of their followers and avoid using authority as a power of personal interest. Transformational leaders with idealized influences gain trust and respect from followers who internalize their high morals and ethical standards, influencing them to follow a line of action by leading by example (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). If leaders lead by example during organizational change, followers will be positively influenced and motivated to maintain a high level of performance during the change process.

Inspirational motivation is the leader's ability to influence others to perform duties beyond expectation (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leaders can motivate and inspire their followers to go beyond the call of duty by articulating a clear perspective and encouraging them to have the same motivation to fulfill organizational goals. Leaders should encourage followers to feel committed to the vision because that inspiration will help increase employee commitment and efficiency in the organization (Wang, 2022). Committed individuals tend to improve their self-interest by performing with a purpose rather than operating with resistance. A person who demonstrates transformational leadership understands that the success

of an organization is highly dependent on employee commitment and discipline in completing obligations (Allali & Allali, 2021). When leaders can motivate their followers, it provides a platform for excellence driven by positive behavior and intellectual stimulation.

Intellectual stimulation is when transformational leaders inspire their followers to be creative by helping manage innovative ideas and challenge the status quo (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Riggio, 2006). To help create change in the organization, leaders should increase the status quo by promoting creativity and innovations. A leader who uses intellectual stimulation encourages followers to explore new learning opportunities and innovative ways of thinking (Jun & Lee, 2023). The primary purpose of intellectual stimulation is to foster creativity through critical thinking and problem-solving so that followers can understand new approaches and techniques (Shafi et al., 2020). For example, if an organization has a failing system, a transformational leader will allow the followers to implement new strategies and approaches to resolve the problem (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019). A transformational leader who stimulates others intellectually support followers as they present innovative ways and new methods to achieve personal goals.

Individualized consideration is when leaders focus on each follower's emotional needs and achievements (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Bass, 2009). These types of leaders interact with their followers based on their capabilities which provides new learning opportunities according to their skills. When followers feel supported by their leaders, they develop a positive vision for the future (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018). Transformational leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration foster supportive relationships while encouraging creativity (Jun & Lee, 2023). These leaders employ a mentorship approach to guide

others by recognizing that each individual possesses distinctive qualities and organizational requirements. Table 1 highlights the four dimensions of transformational leadership.

Table 1

The Four Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Idealized Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model leaders • Internalize high morals and ethical standards. • Focus closely on the needs of followers.
Inspirational Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire followers to go beyond the call of duty. • Articulate clear visions. • Motivate employees to commit to organizational goals.
Intellectual Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate others to be creative. • Foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. • Challenge the status quo.
Individual Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend to follower's emotional needs. • Use a mentorship style to coach others. • Create supportive relationships.

Note. The dimensions of transformational leadership table describe the four components of the transformational leaders: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Adapted from “Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership,” by B. Bass, 1999, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8(1), 9-32 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/135943299398410>).

The dimensions of transformational leadership explain how transformational leaders exhibit high moral standards that instill respect and trust among followers. The theory also shows how transformational leaders demonstrate intellectual stimulation by requesting new creative perspectives for completing goals (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders consider each team

member's aspirations by displaying empathy. When leaders understand individual factors, they motivate their followers to foster their personal development to their fullest potential (Givens, 2008). Transformational leaders build personal growth by making sense of organizational changes, articulating a vision, and providing inspirational motivation by creating optimism (Henricks et al., 2020). Transformational leadership is a leadership style that leaders use to identify organizational problems and set clear visions for organizational development (Alqatawenh, 2018). These leaders inspire their subordinates to advance their intellectual levels to pursue higher achievements for positive organizational change.

An alternative framework that focuses on change management and group dynamics is Kurt Lewin's three-step model of change. Kurt Lewin has contributed to successful change management through the three-step change model. Kurt Lewin's three-step change model focuses on successful change in three steps: unfreezing, moving, and freezing (Burnes, 2020). According to Burnes (2004), the unfreezing process explains the stability of human behavior, which is necessary for change. The moving process is when the pressure for change is more significant than those resisting change. The freezing stage is described as a necessary change that creates the stability of the new condition. Memon et al. (2021) used Kurt Lewin's model to assess employee engagement in change. The three stages provide insight into how employee engagement symbolizes employees' commitment during organizational change. Based on Lewin's model, leaders can increase employee engagement through strong communication, planning, and knowing what motivates employees.

Another framework that focuses on change is Bakari's three-step model for managing change (Memon et al., 2021). Bakari's three-step model includes three stages: a) Commitment; b) Readiness; and c) Behavioral Support. The commitment stage focuses on employee commitment

to change which is managed by employing leadership styles. The readiness stage explains how employee readiness for change is achieved by unfreezing resistance behavior. The behavioral support stage describes how change is accomplished by leaders who show support during change implementation. Bakari et al. (2020) used the three-step model to examine employee commitment to change among healthcare workers in Pakistan. Results determined that Bakari's three-step model positively correlated with behavioral support for change. Those results provide a significant implication for leaders to understand employee attitudes and foster employee support for change.

Farahdiba et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative research study focusing on the factors influencing employee creativity in Indonesia. The research used the four dimensions of transformational leadership theory to examine intrinsic motivation and employee creativity. The four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration, were found to increase creativity and innovations. Farahdiba et al. (2022) used the transformational leadership theory similar to the research to provide an understanding of how transformational leaders affect employee creativity. Jun and Lee (2023) discussed how leaders use intellectual stimulation to increase creativity by encouraging followers to use innovative thinking. When leaders promote creativity and innovation, they increase positive organizational change.

Peng et al. (2021) also used transformational leadership theory to present knowledge on how leaders facilitate or hinder change. By applying transformational leadership theory into the study, the meta-analysis revealed a positive correlation between change readiness, openness to change, and commitment to change (Peng et al., 2021). The research highlighted the value of using transformational leadership theory to determine the correlation between transformational

leaders and employee resistance to change. Committed individuals demonstrate positive behavior toward change and perform with a purpose of self-interest rather than operating with a level of change resistance (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Transformational leaders are essential in improving followers' openness and building trust toward change because trustworthiness is significant in the success of change initiatives.

When leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership, it causes change resistance which affects employee commitment. However, the transformational leadership theory explains how leaders focus on their follower's needs by considering individual needs, providing intellectual stimulation, motivating their followers, and developing idealized influences when implementing change (Bass, 1999). The theory revealed how transformational leaders inspire others by intellectually stimulating them to be innovative during change efforts. The four components of the transformational leadership theory provide a lens that examines the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment, and organizational change behaviors (Stewart, 2006). Examining transformational leadership theory will help future leaders enhance followers' commitment, performance, and motivation for positive change.

Transformational leadership theory guided the purpose of this study because transformational leaders create positive change which improves organizational performance (Sendjaya, 2005). The theory explained how leaders influence positive change by developing a moral process with their subordinates to achieve a collective goal. Transformational leaders positively impact employee commitment which is significant in change readiness (Kim & Shin, 2019). Transformational leadership theory provided a contextual lens to understand how transformational leaders can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors.

Transformational Leader

Transformational leaders govern organizational change by communicating a clear vision of organizational goals to their followers. Communicating a clear vision to inspire and engage followers is critical because the primary goal of a transformational leader is to promote development and inspire growth (Henricks et al., 2020). The success of short-term and long-term organizational goals depends on the leader's and employee's cooperation, teamwork, and clear communication. Organizational success is likely when a trustworthy leader is overseeing the business operations. When a transformational leader is transparent while conveying the organization's vision for change, that transparency instills confidence and trust in followers, which results in fewer job insecurities (Rafiq et al., 2022). Transformational leaders play a significant role in employee performance because transformational leaders use intrinsic values to motivate followers to achieve higher-level objectives. When motivated employees remain committed to their jobs, they become increasingly efficacious, which makes them competitively advantageous (Donkor, 2021). When employees are not motivated, their productivity level decreases, and turnover rates increase due to the lack of job commitment. Krishna et al. (2022) suggest that employees are more efficient in a respectable, trusting working environment which reduces the inclination of staff turnover. By motivating employees to perform their duties effectively and conquer challenges, transformational leaders promote employee commitment to the organization. Pravichai and Ariyabuddhiphongs (2018) developed *the Right Speech Scale* to test 164 bank employees, which provided evidence to support the notion that trusting behaviors mediate the relationship between transformational leaders and turnover intention.

Characteristics of a Transformational Leader

The nature and characteristics of a leader vary according to the situational force adopted based on the organizational context of supportive leadership styles. For example, transformational leaders recognize opportunities for organizational change, establish a plan for achieving transformational change, and execute a strategy to inspire others (Brandt et al., 2019). Their most effective characteristic behaviors are their ability to shift their personal views beyond self-interest to encourage positive change within organizations, individuals, and systems (Han et al., 2018). Many core characteristics describe transformational leaders and their impact on organizational growth; one of those characteristics includes charisma. A charismatic leader can stimulate others to foster critical thinking when planning for change (Prochazka et al., 2018). Another characteristic of a transformational leader consists of change adaptability through organizational development. A leader who adapts to change and transforms their organization performs efficiently and delivers superior results (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022). Such leaders create visions for the future, increase productivity, and build supportive relationships with followers.

Transformational leaders are often perceived as highly charismatic and inspirational because they use charisma to mentor followers, develop innovations, and encourage creativity (Shapira, 2019). Understanding and solving problems helps transformational leaders make effective decisions that gain a competitive advantage. Charisma is a characteristic that embodies personal attraction and enables leaders to influence other leaders. Charismatic leaders demonstrate high performance and inspire their followers while bringing about significant organizational change (Williams et al., 2018). Such charismatic behaviors of transformational leaders motivate others to discover the value of their roles by clearly communicating the organization's vision and goals while exhibiting optimism about the future. Theorists have

supported the significance of charisma for leadership by proposing that charisma enables transformational leaders to communicate effectively with followers (Burns, 1978). The core of a transformational leader's message is fundamental; however, the charismatic delivery of how they convey their message plays a vital role in inspiring followers. Charismatic communication reveals a leader's confidence and commitment toward an organization. Transformational leaders use their confidence and effective communication to increase work morale, contributing to job commitment (Kim & Shin, 2019). Likewise, without charismatic characteristics, leaders may have challenges encouraging followers to embrace organizational change which may affect organizational commitment.

Change can sometimes be challenging, and not everyone may embrace innovations within their job roles. However, transformational leaders quickly adapt to new strategies and take responsibility when suggested changes do not work out (Han et al., 2018). A leader who is adaptable to change also accepts feedback and is eager to hear other people's ideas for innovations. According to Bass (1999), transformation is about embracing change which is the essence of transformational leadership. Leaders who acquire the ability to adapt to change can shape employee attitudes toward change (Ehnrrooth et al., 2021). Transformational leaders who intellectually stimulate their followers encourage them to meet high-performance demands of organizational change by adjusting to changing demands. That intellectual stimulation convinces the followers of their capacity to contribute to organizational goals which increases self-confidence (Susilo, 2018). The dimension of intellectual stimulation, encompassed with a transformational leadership style, can increase acceptance to change and the confidence level to drive the achievement of exceptional future organizational goals. Results have reported that the readiness to experience change is associated with the merits of innovation acceptance (Tayal et

al., 2018). The readiness to adapt to innovations is a key element of transformational leaders which stimulates the inclination for followers to accept change within an organization. If transformational leaders do not create readiness for change in their followers, there will be some change resistance (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The transition from resistance to acceptance will enable employees to acknowledge the change constructively which will cause an increase in productivity and efficacy.

Transformational Leader Behavior

Transformational leaders are particularly effective in promoting innovative behavior in their followers by using creative problem-solving skills to pursue opportunities for advancement and development. Transformational leaders also recognize problems and introduce practical ideas to implement organizational improvement strategies (Jun & Lee, 2023). When leaders display innovative behavior, they often emphasize the importance of performing collective tasks and provide opportunities to execute plans for effective performance. According to Li et al. (2019), transformational leaders influence followers to reexamine prospective concerns in the organizational environment which can lead to developing innovative ideas through intellectual stimulation. When leaders display transformational leadership, such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration, the uncertainty of innovative behavior is reduced (Afsar et al., 2018; Lin, 2023).

Consequently, followers are motivated to apply more effort to understanding a phenomenon and searching for possible solutions. Employees engage more in finding new solutions when they trust their leaders and are confident in implementing innovative strategies (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). When employees feel empowered and intrinsically motivated, their production exceeds the call of duty. If the leaders do not fully understand the innovation process,

the employees may lack the innovative behavior necessary for the quality of the creative output (Bilal et al., 2019). Transformational leaders are innovative, but making their followers feel confident enough to act and perform innovatively is equally essential. In contrast, individuals with low empowerment are less effective because they reject the initiative of innovative behavior which causes them to become demotivated. Employees who feel a high level of encouragement employ proactive behavior due to their creative ability and decision-making (Newman et al., 2018).

A transformational leader with a strong vision of innovation has a clear idea of how to implement change and communicate the vision of change in a way that increases motivation and fosters understanding (Andriani et al., 2018). Transformational leaders articulate a vision by adopting organizational goals and setting high moral standards. Leaders with a clear vision increase their followers' awareness and encourage them to promote higher-quality innovativeness to develop as efficient individuals (Abdulla et al., 2021). Transformational leaders exhibit a positive vision of change as a substance to inspire others to achieve goals for long-term success. Idealized influences are a dimension of transformational leadership that connects vision and goals that stimulate followers and develop psychological capital (Shah et al., 2023). In this regard, transformational leaders inspire others to increase their commitment through high ethical standards. Organizations need transformational leaders who can develop future visions by challenging the status quo and motivating others to apply those visions to the current dynamic world.

Errida and Lotfi (2021) used a case study to analyze organizational change models that help understand factors influencing organizational change success. The case study was conducted within a Moroccan construction company, revealing that the lack of a clear vision for

change is one of the main barriers to successful change management, that leads to resistance. Abelha et al. (2018) suggested that employee attitudes are connected to the influence of transformational leaders who appeal to their ideals and enable them to perceive a higher vision. When followers feel motivated in their contribution to organizational goals and have confidence in their innovative perspective of the future, it results in a positive outcome in their acceptance to change.

Organizational change

Change is inevitable and constant; therefore, businesses must transform to meet new demands in a continuously evolving marketplace. When organizations remain stagnant in the growth development stages, the business may quickly lose its competitive advantage (Hussain et al., 2018). Leaders play a significant role in the growth and development of a company by implementing organizational changes. Leadership competency is critical in effectively implementing and sustaining organizational change in a competitive market (Stouten et al., 2018). Organizations implement change due to the external environment, including socio-economic factors; however, internal factors prompt change such as the need to update procedural systems (Halmaghi et al., 2017). Organizational change is the process of restructuring a business structure that is prompted due to influences that create the need for changes in the behaviors of the organizational employees (Petrou et al., 2018). Organizations need effective change management to remain operative in an ever-changing world. However, barriers such as change resistance can sometimes create challenges to the change management process if change is not implemented correctly (Orji, 2019). Organizations must know how to cope with the challenges and propose a constructive change for future success to survive in the business world.

Types of Organizational Change

Organizations undergo many changes to achieve profitability and revenue growth which may include business restructuring, mergers, or process improvements. External and internal conditions such as competitors, technological factors, or policy improvements will remain significant in an organization's capacity to serve the ever-changing needs of the internal and external environment (Dempsey et al., 2022). Whether the cause of organizational change is internal or external, the key to a successful business is how leaders manage effective organizational change (Stouten et al., 2018). Transformational leaders need to understand what changes are necessary for organizational growth and how the changes will affect employees. There are many types of changes that organizations can implement within the organization such as strategic change or structural change. By identifying the type of organizational change to apply, transformational leaders can develop a plan to keep employees engaged throughout the change management process (Henricks et al., 2020). Transformational leaders can also request feedback as they implement changes and adjust the implementation plan when necessary. When employees feel that they have support from their leaders, they tend to maintain high engagement that drives them to perform at an advanced level (Zhu et al., 2023).

Organizational leaders are typically the ones that are responsible for implementing strategic change within an organization to achieve specific objectives. When leaders use strategies for organizational performance and then decide to change that approach, they employ strategic change (Chinoperekweyi et al., 2022). Transformational leaders are known for implementing strategic changes by adjusting the business structure, policies, and processes (Alqatawenh, 2018). Organizations must adjust their strategy to attain goals or even amend the mission statement in response to changing demands. Changing a company's strategy requires adjustments to the fundamental approach of how business is conducted because strategic change

considers the overall orientation of an organization. Such strategic modifications include targeting a new market in response to opportunities or threats or maintaining a competitive advantage in a highly evolving market (Anning-Dorson, 2018).

Managing strategic change is equally important as implementing new strategies for organizational change. Strategic change management is managing strategy in a structured way to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Bogers et al., 2019). A well-known model for strategic change management is the Kotter 8-step change model which consists of eight steps on how to manage change strategically (Eriksson & Fundin, 2018). Eriksson & Fundin (2018) explain the 8-step model by describing the first three steps:

- 1) Sense of urgency
- 2) Core coalition
- 3) Forming a strategic vision as focusing on establishing the appropriate environment based on the vision for change.
- 4) Communicating a shared vision
- 5) Empowering employees to act
- 6) Generating short-term wins
- 7) Consolidating gains and producing more change move toward involving and stimulating the organization and its workforce to prepare for the change.
- 8) Initiating and setting new changes is about applying and sustaining change.

Table 2 outlines Kotter's 8-Step change model.

Table 2

Kotter's 8-Step Change Model

Step 1: Create a sense of urgency.

-
- The organization realizes the need for change and act on the change process without delay.
-

Step 2: Create a core coalition.

- Developing a coalition to create urgency surrounding the demand for change.
-

Step 3: Develop and form a strategic vision.

- Forming a sensible clear transformation vision.
-

Step 4: Communicate and share vision plans.

- Share the vision of change with others to get them involved.
-

Step 5: Empowering employees to act on the vision.

- Allowing employees to try new strategies and ideas.
-

Step 6: Generate short-term wins.

- Produce change with significant outcomes.
-

Step 7: Consolidate gains and produce more change.

- Avoid prior habits by focusing on the continuous progress of goals.
-

Step 8: Initiate and set new changes.

- Institutionalize the change.
-

Note. Kotter's 8-step change model explains the eight steps of strategic change management.

Adapted from "Change Management Models: A Comparative Analysis and Concerns," by Galli, J., 2018, IEEE Engineering Management Review, Engineering Management Review, IEEE, IEEE Eng.Manag.Rev., 46(3), 124-132. <https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2018.2866860>.

Organizations often realize the necessity to restructure the company due to consequences from internal or external factors that directly affect the business (Halmaghi et al., 2017).

Structural changes involve significant shifts in business processes, including product design and marketing (Alwetwat, 2023). A structural change may be as straightforward as implementing an automation system or as complex as reorganizing business operations to effectively meet consumer needs' demands. One common external event that prompts structural change is changes in the market. Organizations make structural changes due to global competition, market changes, or to meet customer demands to influence the direction of the market (Jayatilleke & Lai, 2018). Some structural changes may also include modifying the organization's mission, vision, or values. To maintain a competitive advantage, organizations must restructure a few processes to fit the customer's needs, especially if the demand constantly changes.

Organizational Change Management

Organizational change is a process of transitioning that is necessary to meet changing demands and objectives to maintain a competitive advantage in a continuously evolving market (Buono & Kerber, 2010). As time progresses and demands change, specific business changes involving marketing, operational or financial changes become pertinent for improving the probability of reaching organizational goals. Transformational leaders are the driving force of successful organizational change management because they help employees understand the intended change and how to cope with the various types of change (Alqatawenh, 2018).

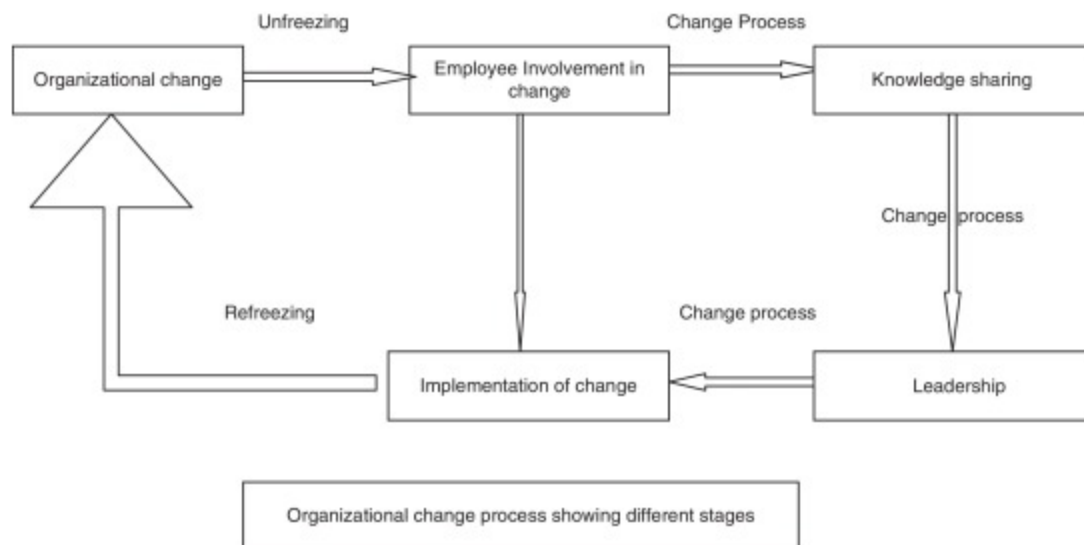
Organizational change management applies a pre-planned framework and structured methods to transition an organization from its current to desirable conditions. Organizations should focus on effective action plans and avoid using ineffective methods when managing and implementing change strategies for organizational growth (Oreg & Berson, 2019). Managing change is a continuing process that requires time, effort, dedication, and expertise to implement and operate. Before adopting a change management approach or model, an organization must understand why

the change is needed and how the change will benefit the business. Kurt Lewin's change model is a practical approach to reference when implementing change management (Memon et al., 2021).

Kurt Lewin's Change Model. Kurt Lewin's change model is an effective model that makes it viable for users to understand the organizational change process. Lewin's method is a subsequent approach that explains the outline of the essential stages of change management (Arora & Giri, 2022). Lewin's model has been categorized into three stages of change which underlines the significance of management, leadership, and organization before launching each change phase (Burnes, 2020). Those three stages indicate the steps of the unfreezing, changing, and refreezing phase to explain employee and leadership involvement during the change process. According to Hussain et al. (2018), leadership has a significant role as a change agent to unfreeze the organization when planning for change. Transformational leadership style influences the change process because transformational leaders have the skills to adapt to the ever-changing environment (Kozcu & Timurcanday, 2021). Transformational leaders also teach their employees how to manage change while involving them in the decision-making of change implementation (Chis-Manolache, 2022). Figure 1 illustrates Kurt Lewin's change management model.

Figure 1

Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model



Note. The arrows indicated in the figure show the process of the three stages of Kurt Lewin's change model. Adapted from "Kurt Lewin's Change Model: A Critical Review of the Role of Leadership and Employee Involvement in Organizational Change. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*," by Hussain, T., Lei, S., Akram, T., Haider, J., Hussain, H., & Ali, M. (2018), *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 3(3), 123-127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2016.07.002>.

Kurt Lewin postulates that individual behavior regarding an intended change is a form of group behavior. Any interaction affecting the group dynamic also shapes individual behavior and organizational change capacity (Crosby, 2022). The following three stages of the change model describe the proposed change as an approach to understanding organizational change behavior during the change process (Galli, 2018). The first stage of Kurt Lewin's change model is the unfreeze stage which describes the process of change as the preparation phase that explains why the change is necessary and how it is profitable. The unfreeze stage is significant for managing organizational change because this phase helps organizations prepare for the change, which decreases change resistance. The second stage of Kurt Lewin's model of change is the change phase, which is where the transition occurs. During the change phase, leaders communicate the

change process with the employees to help them understand the changes and developments and to lead the organization in the right direction. The last stage is the refreeze stage, in which the change has been accepted. In the refreeze phase, change is implemented and embraced, and the organization returns to the typical routine in a stable environment (Galli, 2018). Stability increases employees' confidence levels during organizational change and builds their morale and performance (Saira et al., 2021).

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is employees' emotional involvement with an organization in which they desire to dedicate their services to the organization by helping achieve its goals and objectives (Ramos et al., 2022). Employees with high levels of organizational commitment increase their performance by improving service quality and decreasing turnover (Vance et al., 2020). When leadership styles align with employee expectations, the employee becomes fully committed to their role and more productive with higher levels of job satisfaction (Yuan et al., 2022). Highly committed employees realize that their commitment to their job role increases an organization's success rate, encouraging them to take voluntary actions necessary for organizational success. According to Ghazinejad et al., 2018, there are common influences of employee commitment initiatives: a) the sense of belonging in an organization; b) how employee's emotional connection influences project performance and outcomes. Another effect of employee commitment is the emphasis on building trust between the employees and the organization. Leaders who build trusting relationships with employees develop a solid organizational culture and higher retention of committed employees (Ghazinejad et al., 2018). In addition to influential factors of employee commitment, there are various types of employee commitment to examine and many ways to improve employee commitment to change.

Types of Employee Commitment

John Meyer and Natalie Allen established a three-component commitment model published in 1991 (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Meyer and Allen provide insightful research surrounding three distinct types of employee commitment: a) Affective commitment, b) Normative commitment, and c) Continuous commitment. When employees have affection for their job, they feel a strong emotional connection to the organization. Employees who enjoy their organizational role are more prone to advance (Luu et al., 2019). Affective commitment to an organization means that the employee will most likely remain at that organization because of the emotional attachment and involvement with the organization's goals and values (Singh, 2018). From a transformational change perspective, affective commitment is an individual's desire to commit to change (Mahmmud et al., 2019). Employees with affective commitment internalize the organization's objectives because they relate to the organization's goals and values and sincerely want to be involved with and connected to the organization (Khajuria & Khan, 2022).

Employees who are normatively committed to an organization typically feel that they should remain in their current position because of their loyalty to and obligation toward the company (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). Employees who demonstrate normative commitment toward an organization feel obligated to the company even if they are not satisfied with their job role because they feel it is obligatory. There are two dimensions to normative commitment: a) Moral duty and b) Indebted obligation (Masud et al., 2018). Employees who feel they have a moral obligation to pursue a course of action because it is ethical. Employees who feel they have an indebted obligation believe they will only succeed if they fulfill their duty to the company. When employees have a normative commitment to change, they feel a sense of duty to work towards that change. That is why it is critical to demonstrate transformational leadership because

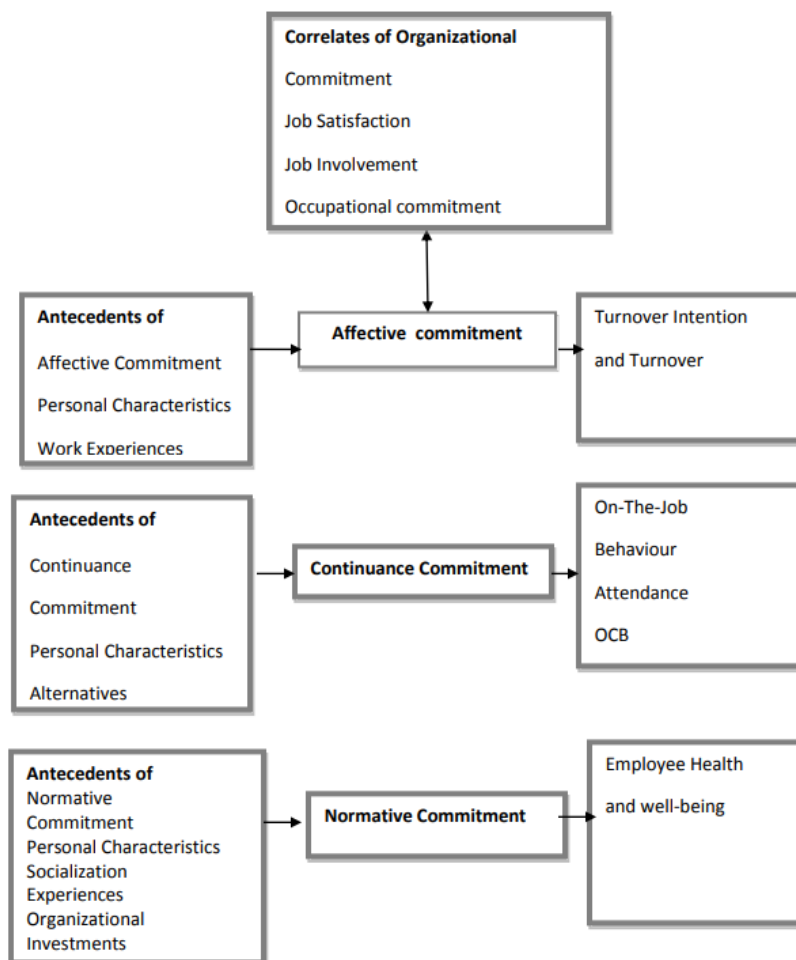
the leadership style ensures job satisfaction and commitment, by motivating the employees to help the organization achieve its long-term goals (Luu & Phan, 2020).

Continuance commitment is when employees feel obligated to remain at an organization due to little success in finding a better profession (Luu et al., 2019). This type of commitment happens when an employee considers the advantages of staying at an organization and the disadvantages of leaving. The underlying motive for continuance commitment is grounded on the theory of continuing with an organization because of economic relief (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019).

Employees are more likely to experience continuance commitment if they are established in successful roles with financial stability. Employees may also continue their commitment to an organization during organizational changes. In terms of organizational change, continuance commitment to change relates to the belief that a price is paid if employees do not commit to organizational targets (Mahmmud et al., 2019). As a result, employees feel committed to their profession when there is effective communication within the organization which increases employee retention and organizational growth. Figure 2 shows a three-component model of commitment.

Figure 2

A Three-Component Model of Commitment



Note. Each component is a psychological state that influences an individual's work experience, socialization experience, and behavior which affects job satisfaction, involvement, and organizational commitment. Adapted from "A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment," by Malaysia, M., 2016, International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 6(12), 2222-6990.

Transformational Leadership as a Core Essence of Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is more associated with transformational leadership than normative or continuance commitment because affective commitment requires intrinsic motivation to achieve desirable organizational outcomes (Cho et al., 2019). Transformational

leadership significantly contributes to affective commitment because transformational leaders motivate and inspire their followers to perform beyond expectations (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Transformational leaders also build trust with followers, encourage positive emotions toward job performance, and boost employee confidence (Jena et al., 2018; Sahu et al., 2018). Employees who work with transformational leaders improve their skills and develop an effective commitment to organizations that invest in them. That trust increases organizational commitment resulting in higher performance (Eliyana et al., 2019). Transformational leaders provide the necessary support to their followers which makes employees develop their emotional attachment to organizational goals which, in turn, results in employee willingness to commit during organizational change (Islam et al., 2021).

Peng et al. (2020) studied the influence between transformational leadership and affective organizational commitment in public and nonprofit organizations. The existing study argued that transformational leadership strengthens the influence of employees' affective commitment.

Transformational leaders who are consistent with the values they foster can develop followers' commitment to those same values because they inspire and motivate their followers by encouraging them to pursue organizational goals rather than self-interest (Buil et al., 2019).

Transformational leaders also provide intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence to solidify the follower's affective commitment to common organizational goals that are induced in the process (Sahu et al., 2018). Thus, transformational leaders enhance employees' work performance and strengthen their affective commitment to the organization.

Figure 3 shows the mediators and moderators of transformational leadership and affective commitment.

Figure 3*Mediators and Moderators of Transformational Leadership and Affective Commitment*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Mediators	Articles
Transformational leadership	Affective commitment	Self-concordance	Bono and Judge (2003)
		Psychological empowerment	Barroso Castro, Villegas Periñan, and Casillas Bueno (2008)
		Collective self-efficacy	Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler, and Shi (2004)
		Follower beliefs (i.e., inspiration, awe, and empowerment)	McCann, Langford, and Rawlings (2006)
		Meaningful task content	Korek, Felfe, and Zaepernick-Rothe (2010)
		Positive organizational climate	Korek et al. (2010)
Independent variable	Dependent variable	Moderators	Articles
Transformational leadership	Affective commitment	Job enrichment	Whittington, Goodwin, and Murray (2004)
		Goal difficulty	Whittington et al. (2004)
		Team consensus concerning leadership	Felfe and Heinitz (2010)
		Leader–team agreement with regard to the leaders' perceived leadership style	Felfe and Heinitz (2010)
		Humor	Hughes and Avey (2009)

Note. The figure shows mediators and moderators of transformational leadership and affective commitment. The figure also includes early research studies that examine the relationship between transformational leadership and affective commitment. Adapted from "The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employees' Affective Organizational Commitment in Public and Nonprofit Organizations," by Peng, S., Liao, Y., & Sun, R., 2020, *Public Personnel Management*, 49(1), 29-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026019835233>.

Employee Resistance to Change

The sustenance of any organization in today's business environment depends on the execution of successful change. However, an organization's prominent challenge when implementing change is resistance from its employees (Moutousi & May, 2018). When individuals are reluctant to adapt to change, they resist it. Employees can be explicit or covert about their indisposition to accommodate organizational changes. This adversary can vary from openly expressing their resistance to inadvertently resisting change through general actions. Change resistance can happen on an individual level or an organizational level. Individual resistance to change occurs based on personal influences such as justice and fairness which build trust and confidence in management (Rehman et al., 2021). Organizational resistance is the inclination to resist change and maintain the status quo throughout the entire organization (Oreg et al., 2018). Firms that endure organizational resistance face challenges adapting to internal demands for organizational change. Indicators of organizational resistance include a lack of confidence in leadership and poor decision-making during organizational change processes. Whether resistance exists on an individual or organizational level, one thing that remains mutual is that change resistance is based on attitudes toward change (Repovs et al., 2019).

Cause of Employee Resistance

As an organizational leader, it is essential to identify the cause of employee resistance. Organizations that prepare for change will develop employees who are more accepting of adapting to those changes, which can facilitate employees to commit to future change (Ahmad & Cheng, 2018). Employees often develop a sense of fear when leaders introduce change with unfamiliarity associated with new adaptations, which can cause employees to develop adverse reactions toward change (Repovs et al., 2019). However, leaders must shape employees' resistive

attitudes toward implementing change. Banguntopo (2018) has focused on factors influencing resistance to change and implied that employees' readiness for change is greatly influenced by shifting attitudes in favor of change. Fear of failure in facing a new situation is a behavior that needs to be shaped to avoid change resistance and create change readiness amongst employees (Indriastuti & Fachrunnisa, 2021).

One of the most significant shortcomings of change is employees' attitudes associated with organizational change, and their sense of fear (Ahmad & Cheng, 2018). Employees often have resistive behaviors when they do not understand the implications of change (Mansaray, 2019). According to Thakur and Srivastava (2018), uncertainty increases resistance from employees as they may be apprehensive of failing to adopt new practices after the change process. Employees often worry that failing will negatively influence their job performance which may ultimately affect their job security (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Therefore, employees resist change when they are not confident with adapting because they feel susceptible to their shortcomings which safeguards them from failure. Leaders can refer to the Aware, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) model to address change uncertainties regarding the fear of failure.

ADKAR Change Management Model. The ADKAR Model has two objectives that address the fear of failure: ability and knowledge. Knowledge and ability correlate with one another because the ability to demonstrate skills and behaviors is based on the knowledge of how to change (Shaikh, 2020). The self-confidence that employees harvest when they have a clear understanding of their expectations makes them comfortable with implementing change within the organization. Offering employees with *knowledge* is critical because those resources provide hands-on experiences to develop new skills to facilitate the change which is the *ability* to

transform (Dziak, 2021). The ADKAR change management model highlights awareness and desire as an aim to move an individual from the current state, where change is necessary but has yet to be implemented (Galli, 2018). The ADKAR Model uses each sequential step as a milestone to reach throughout the process. One of the most significant features of the ADKAR Model is that the five steps identify resistance areas (Dziak, 2021). Figure 4 illustrates the ADKAR change management model.

Figure 4

The ADKAR Change Management Model



Note. The ADKAR change model is sequenced by how individuals encounter change. Adapted from "Understanding Change: A Critical Review of Literature," by Shaikh, A., 2020, *Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR)*, 2(43).

Overcoming Resistance through Employee Engagement

Resistance to change is the unwillingness to adapt to new conditions, which can be subtle or overt and exist at an individual or organizational level (Rehman et al., 2021; Oreg et al., 2018). There are many causes of employee resistance to change, but change resistance is rooted in fear of failure and the unknown (Repovs et al., 2019). People are organically comfortable with familiarity and predictability, so any uncertainties can trigger fear, even if it is a positive or anticipated change (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Change is a significant attribute of transformational leadership, and transformational change is a consequence of the change that causes resistive behavior and attitudes among followers (Busari et al., 2020). Employee resistance to change is common within organizations and is present in many forms. No matter how resistance is manifested, the advantage is that overcoming change resistance is possible (Laidoune et al., 2022). Transformational leaders can help employees overcome resistance to change through employee engagement (Yue et al., 2019).

Transformational leaders who are motivational towards their followers understand the importance of inspiration and how it creates a comfort zone and safety net for those involved in the change. Transformational leaders realize that organizational transformation can cause resistance, so motivational factors are significant when engaging followers in the change process (Mansaray, 2019). Engaging employees in the change process involves open communication about the change that will occur and eliminates the fear of the unknown. When transformational leaders do not engage with their employees, it can become detrimental to implement change because the lack of communication will create assumptions (Busari et al., 2020). The lack of communication from leaders can also create a barrier to commitment, resulting in employee resistance which is a leading cause of why many transformational changes are unsuccessful (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). During times of uncertainty, employees experiencing change expect open

and honest communication from their leaders about future changes. Transformational leaders must communicate what they know about the change, including when it will occur and how it will positively affect the organization long term (Yue et al., 2019).

Change Readiness

Transformational leaders often make business changes to be more competitive and profitable in today's business environment. Many organizations analyze how those business changes influence processes but overlook how those changes impact their employees. When employees do not understand what type of changes are occurring, they experience a lack of confidence and fear that leads to unsuccessful attempts to achieve organizational change goals (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Beyond revisions of new systems or current processes, successful change is determined by those impacted by the change and their readiness for change (Engida et al., 2022). The idea can unsettle employees whether change is anticipated or unforeseen, so understanding readiness for change can make the process seamless for those involved. Although predicting the future can sometimes be challenging, organizations need to be prepared for possible changes before the change takes place (Gigliotti et al., 2019). Organizations that are ready for change avoid impediments that hinder the change process.

Assessing Change Readiness

There are a few ways to assess change readiness which range from consultations that include standard questions, online surveys, or formal interviews. Leaders often use the *Readiness to Change Questionnaire (RCQ)* to evaluate participant's readiness to change and the *Organizational Readiness for Change (ORC)* assessment to evaluate change readiness throughout the entire organization (Agnieszka & Agnieszka, 2021; Billsten et al., 2018). Conducting change readiness assessments help organizations identify barriers and

facilitators to improve effective change implementation (Kononowech et al., 2021). The assessment results can help leaders analyze the employee's willingness to adopt the change and determine whether to modify, postpone or cancel the change initiative. The data and feedback from change readiness assessments can be insightful for leaders because the willingness to change influences the adoption of innovations (Lenihan et al., 2019). If employees are not prepared to adopt the change, then there is a risk that the organization may not meet its intended goals.

Agnieszka and Agnieszka (2021) conducted a study using the Readiness to Change Questionnaire assessment (RCQ). The assessment included seven 5-item dimensions of readiness to change which were optimism, passion, adventurousness, confidence, adaptability, resourcefulness, and tolerance for ambiguity. The results indicated a positive correlation between the employees' readiness to change and the dimension of optimism. Crittendon et al. (2020) completed a study using the Organizational Readiness for Change assessment (ORC). The assessment was completed by current and former residents and included 5-item dimensions: management, empowerment, quality leadership, quality leadership skills, and quality leadership ability. The results from the research identified concerns regarding team collaboration and communication which means that miscommunication undermines organizational readiness to change.

Healthcare Organization

Healthcare organizations provide consumers with two general healthcare services: Preventative care (preventive) and illness care (restorative). Preventative care includes prevention and treatment plans to prevent illness (Gameiro et al., 2018). Restorative care focuses on patient recovery which improves the rehabilitation process (Gao & Zhang, 2019). Most

healthcare organizations, such as hospitals, physician offices, or public health departments, focus on both healthcare services. As the world evolves economically and socially, the importance of development within healthcare organizations has become prominent for effectively meeting consumer needs and competitive demands (Ramori et al., 2021). Changes within the healthcare system are anticipated as the population number of patient care increases, and the demand for healthcare professionals exceeds the supply (Drennan & Ross, 2019). Emphasis on continuance performance improvement demands that healthcare organizations continuously consider their current business practices and make changes accordingly.

Transformational Leadership in Healthcare Organizations

Transformational leaders facilitate positive change by motivating and inspiring employees to perform beyond expectation. According to Al-Hussami et al. (2018), transformational nurse managers enhance effective job performance, nurses' retention, and employee readiness for change. The nurse managers demonstrate transformational leadership by empowering the nurses to perform beyond the call of duty in the organization's interest. From a healthcare marketing perspective, a transformational leader informs followers of the potential risks that may arise with restructuring marketing strategies that precede the follower's needs over the leader's personal needs (Freihat, 2020). Examining transformational leadership and marketing strategies within the healthcare sector is necessary because the leadership style prepares the environment for effective marketing strategies that will help meet consumer needs and competitive demands (Ramori et al., 2021).

Atieh et al. (2022) posits that idealized influence is the key dimension of transformational leadership behaviors in healthcare organizations. Idealized influence refers to leaders as role models with high morals and principles (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). However, a leading cause

of change resistance in healthcare institutions is the lack of role model leaders (Atieh et al., 2022). Alrubaysh et al. (2022) examined the relationship between transformational leadership styles and performance outcomes among 65 raters and 65 managers within primary healthcare centers in Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that idealized influence is positively associated with high-performance behaviors within the healthcare industry. When leaders demonstrate high morals, their followers notice those ethical standards and model those same behaviors.

Healthcare systems are rapidly changing, demand for nursing care is continuously increasing, and healthcare organizations are facing a decrease in resources to provide effective patient care services (Maré et al., 2019). Ongoing change has been essential in healthcare because of constant development and new management approaches; however, organizations must be prepared for change. Sehanovic et al. (2022) emphasized how healthcare leaders influence organizational commitment and willingness for change by creating readiness for change to overcome resistance. Al-Hussami et al. (2018) suggest a similar notion by highlighting the influence of leadership behavior on the organizational readiness for change within healthcare organizations. The results from the research indicated a positive contribution between leadership behavior and employee commitment which shows that leadership behavior is linked to organizational readiness for change.

Gaps in the Literature

Research has shown a significant interest in transformational leadership behavior, and scholars have argued that transformational leadership can improve organizational change behaviors. Transformational leadership has been debated as influential in enhancing supportive change behaviors during organizational change (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2020). However, the literature in which transformational leadership leads to positive employee behaviors toward

change needs further examination (Faupel & Süß, 2019). There is also a gap in the literature that shows a paucity of research that addresses the effects of transformational leadership and employee commitment, specifically within healthcare organizations. Therefore, the research aimed to address the literature gap regarding the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational change behaviors, such as employee commitment among healthcare professionals working in healthcare organizations. Interviews were conducted to measure transformational leadership behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals to determine how transformational leadership leads to positive employee reactions to change and close the knowledge gap.

Summary

Transformational leaders manage change by articulating clear visions of expectations to their followers. A transparent transformational leader who communicates the vision for organizational change instills trust and confidence in followers, leading to fewer career insecurities (Rafiq et al., 2022). Change is expected and continuous, so organizations need effective change management to meet changing demands and remain competitive. However, when change is not adequately implemented, barriers such as resistance negatively impact the change management process (Orji, 2019). Leaders who develop trusting alliances with their employees create a higher retention of committed workers (Ghazinejad et al., 2018). Employees with increased levels of commitment improve their job performance by providing high-quality service in their role within the organization (Vance et al., 2020). Successful change goes beyond new systems and processes; the individuals determine effective change and readiness to experience new change (Engida et al., 2022). As the world evolves socially and economically, growth within healthcare industries is significant for effectively meeting patient care needs

(Ramori et al., 2021). The research study provided insight into how transformational leadership leads to positive employee reactions to change within healthcare organizations. Chapter 3 explains the research method used in the study. The next chapter includes the research methodology and design, population and sample, instrumentation and study procedures. The data analysis, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are also discussed. The chapter concludes with ethical assurances and a chapter summary.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Transformational leaders have been an asset in achieving organizational goals and objectives and are associated with successful organizational change and innovations (Bjekić et al., 2019). Although transformational leaders significantly influence the achievement levels of organizational change, employees also play a vital role in the change process (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Organizations must create an adaptable environment for employing change and innovations to achieve business objectives. However, successful change depends on employee commitment toward organizational change and change readiness. Transformational leadership has been connected to change readiness, employee commitment, and supportive change behavior (Faupel & Süß, 2019). Employees who demonstrate supportive behaviors have trust in their leaders during the change process which leads to employee commitment (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021).

The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by a lack of transformational leadership when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by lack of transformational leadership when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). This chapter provides an overview of the qualitative research methodology and case study research design. The content in this chapter includes instrumentation, population and sample size. The study procedures, data

analysis, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions are also examined. Chapter 3 concludes with the ethical assurances and chapter summary.

Research Methodology and Design

Qualitative methodology has made a remarkable impression as a practical research method for identifying real-world problems. Qualitative research has guided many studies to help explain workplace behavior and how employees achieve organizational goals (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The qualitative research methodology aligns with the purpose statement because it provides insight into how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. Questionnaires and interviews are structural methods used in a qualitative study to gather data and provide clear explanations versus elusive responses that require further probing (Afolayan & Oniyinde, 2019). Questionnaires and structured interviews use structured questioning as a data collection method to collect information on the research topic.

Employing qualitative research instruments such as interviews and questionnaires answered three research questions which were:

RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

The research included interviews and questionnaires to help examine transformational leadership behavior and the mediating effects of employee commitment to change. Qualitative

methodology was appropriate for addressing the research problem because qualitative research allows scholars to examine concerns within organizational structures, practices, and culture (Mulisa, 2021). A qualitative research method addressed the issues regarding change resistance and the decline of employee commitment when leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership.

Another type of research method consists of a quantitative research methodology. Quantitative research involves gathering and analyzing numerical data to help identify trends, test relationships, make predictions, and generalize (Mulisa, 2021). The quantitative method is commonly used in social science research surrounding psychology, biology, economics, and others. There are two types of methods for conducting quantitative research: a) primary quantitative research method and b) secondary quantitative research methods. Researchers conducting primary research collect data directly from initial research rather than previously published research (Sileyew, 2019). The secondary quantitative research method or desk review involves data collection from existing data to increase the effectiveness of the research (Sileyew, 2019). A quantitative methodology was unsuitable for this research because quantitative research is widely considered to test or confirm preconceived theories and assumptions (Smith, 2023). However, the research required a qualitative approach to help gather insight and understand concepts surrounding transformational leadership behavior and employee commitment.

There are several types of qualitative research designs. The case study design is instrumental when examining theories regarding real-world occurrences because case studies thoroughly analyze a suggested population of specific interest within a selected environment (Hancock et al., 2021). Case studies provide an understanding of organizational challenges

concerning workplace issues that cause limitations of organizational success and employee engagement (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). An exploratory case study was appropriate for the research because the design provides reliability within the framework and explains personal phenomena by focusing on the why and how of the decision-making practices (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The exploratory case study design merged themes with current issues regarding change resistance and employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals in North Carolina. The study participants offered insight from their encounters with change resistance and how transformational leadership behavior has a significant role in the variations of successful organizational change.

Grounded theory employs a research design to build a philosophy involving social concerns. The theoretical design discovers problems in social environments based on participants' perspectives and experiences of a phenomenon (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). Grounded theory depends on the data collected through the research process, so the research allows theories to emerge from the data gathered on the topic (Ylona et al., 2019). Grounded theory is a methodology for social sciences that produces conceptual theory from systematically gathered data (Šviráková & Bianchi, 2018). The grounded theory design was not selected for the study because grounded theory design collects data to develop concepts and generate theories. The purpose of the case study was to build on previous literature surrounding an existing theory and not to build a new theory.

The narrative design uses historical statements to develop narrative stories to gain insight into the personal accounts of the participants (Renjith et al., 2021). Narrative research is an interpretive and analytical framework for gathering data in social science, education, and health. There are two steps to narrative research: a) the initial step requires an explanation of the

participant's encounters through a narrative lens, and b) the researcher gathers the information from the participant's accounts and uses that data as a constructivist and interpretivist paradigm (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Narrative research is presented as transcripts of in-depth interviews, autobiographies, journals, and other narrative designs and then applied to research (Ntinda, 2019). A narrative design was not selected for the study because a narrative approach focuses on stories that people use to narrate specific experiences.

The phenomenology design is a philosophical model that explains individuals' lived experience of a phenomenon and how they are impacted by a situation (Neubauer et al., 2019). The purpose of phenomenology is to recount personal experiences regarding what individuals experienced and how they experienced the phenomenon. Phenomenology research uses data collection techniques such as interviews to understand other people's experiences and gather new insights surrounding a particular phenomenon (Klinke & Fernandez, 2023). Phenomenological interviews involve interviewers that ask open-ended questions to the interviewees to elicit in-depth explanations and capture lived experiences of participants (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018). The phenomenology design was unsuitable because the study did not focus on capturing the lived experience of others.

Ethnography is rooted in anthropology, in which anthropologists use ethnographic research designs to understand the culture of specific behaviors (Renjith et al., 2021). An ethnography design is a research method that analyzes a specific grouping within a particular culture. The data from ethnographies are gathered from the examinations of the cultural group during a specific time within a natural setting (Smith, 2023). The purpose of ethnography design is to help readers understand group culture. Ethnographies help make sense of lived experiences and link those involvements to business development regarding new systems, products, or

services (Merzali & Hamarat, 2022). Studies emphasizing real-world problems require research methods that involve developing designs such as ethnographies. However, the ethnography design was not considered appropriate because the study focused on individuals' behavior instead of understanding group cultures.

Population and Sample

The population for the study included healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. Purposive sampling was the sampling technique that was used to identify participants for the study. The purposive sampling technique helped identify individuals with relevant experiences to the research question (Bullard, 2023). The population was appropriate for the research because the purpose of the study was to examine how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment. The leader group addressed how leaders who do not demonstrate transformational leadership in implementing organizational change can create resistance. The employee group provided insight into how a decrease in employee commitment is present when leaders do not exhibit transformational leadership behaviors.

The sample size consisted of 18 employees, which included eight participants from the leader group and 10 participants from the employee group. The sample size was appropriate for the study because 18 participants was enough to reach saturation and determine how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) denote that the sample size to achieve saturation ranges from 5 to 24 interviews. Multiple tests from several studies show that the smallest sample size for saturation is five interviews, and the largest sample size for saturation ranges between 20 and 40 interviews (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The eligibility requirement for the leader group

included a) participants must be 18 years or older b) must work in a healthcare organization in North Carolina c) must have supervisory experience for five or more employees and d) be in a leadership role for at least 6 months. The eligibility requirements for the employee group included a) participants must be 18 years or older b) must work in the healthcare industry in North Carolina, and c) must be employed with the healthcare organization for at least six months.

After obtaining approval from National University's IRB (Appendix A), participants were recruited from two healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The healthcare organizations ranged between skilled nursing facilities and private practice medical offices. A skilled nursing facility provides restorative post-acute care to patients discharged from the hospital (Liggett et al., 2023). A private practice is a medical office that provides preventative care and treatment plans to avoid illness (Locke, 2018). Recruitment efforts included social media platforms such as LinkedIn targeting North Carolina healthcare professionals. The data was obtained from LinkedIn using search engines to enlist the targeted population. The participants were compensated with a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon for participating in the study.

Instrumentation

Interviews and questionnaires involve specific themes that are essential for collecting data in business research for organizational development (Billups, 2021). The data were gathered using a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and interview protocol for the leader group (Appendix C) and employee group (Appendix D) to evaluate transformational leadership behaviors and employee readiness to change. The demographic questionnaire included the participant's age, level of education, and years of work experience at the healthcare organization.

The Qualtrics software was used to create a demographic questionnaire. Qualtrics is a software program that formats data and evaluates participant responses (Molnar, 2019). The participants completed the demographic questionnaire prior to conducting the interview. The demographic questionnaire and individual interviews supported existing theories and determined how change resistance and a decline in employee commitment occur when leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership behavior when implementing change.

The demographic questionnaire was another instrumentation that was used to collect data regarding the specific demographic background of the study population. The demographic questionnaires and individual interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of how resistance and decreased employee commitment exist when leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership. Questionnaires and interviews guided the case study by measuring employee commitment and transformational leadership behavior among healthcare administrative professionals. The data analyzed how transformational change can improve employee commitment and how healthcare leaders can impact the change process.

The data for the study was collected by conducting individual interviews for leaders (Appendix E) and employees (Appendix F) to support the views of the issues raised by the study participants. The interview protocol guide informed each participant on the process before, during, and after the interview. Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher reviewed the IRB consent letter with both the leader group (Appendix G) and employee group (Appendix H) participants to obtain verbal consent. The interview process lasted approximately 30 minutes. A script was used to guide the interview process and to prevent possible biases from personal opinions and beliefs. Microsoft Teams was used to conduct the interview discussion virtually. The interview questions were reviewed by executive professionals in the healthcare

administration field for field testing. The executive professionals reviewed the interview questions to determine if the questions were suitable for the study. The executive professionals determined that the interview questions were suitable for the research study. The interview questions were structured by using predetermined questions in a set order to cover key topics and allow new concepts to emerge from the data (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The interview questions were open-ended, using questions that prompted clear responses that required the participants to respond in detail to avoid vague responses and prevent further probing questions. Five questions were on the demographic questionnaire, and 12 questions were included in the interview protocol for the leader group and the employee group.

Study Procedures

The initial step in the study procedure was to recruit the participants for the study. Participants were recruited from two types of healthcare organizations within North Carolina. The type of healthcare organization included private practices, medical offices, and skilled nursing facilities. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn was used as a recruitment tool to target healthcare professionals in North Carolina. The data was obtained from LinkedIn to enlist the targeted population to interview. The interview process consisted of the participants completing a demographic questionnaire prior to conducting the interview. The data from the demographic questionnaire was collected before the interview started to ensure that the participants met the demographic requirements to participate in the study.

The next step included the interview protocol for the study participants. Participants received the interview protocol guide, informing them of the interview process and expectations. The participants reviewed the consent form via email prior to the interview. The interview process started once the participants reviewed the consent form and agreed to participate in the

study. The interview included questions from the interview guide and follow-up questions as necessary. After the interview was completed, the participants were reassured of the confidentiality of the interview and were informed when they can expect to receive the interview transcripts. Participants were sent the interview transcripts for member-checking immediately after the interview. Once the participants returned their transcripts with feedback, the interview process concluded by thanking the participants for their time and contribution and rewarding a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon via email for participating in the study.

Data Analysis

NVivo is a data analysis software program used to enhance and develop theories using interview information (Dalkin et al., 2021). The NVivo software was used to compare the data to related themes about challenges organizations experience during change and employee resistance to organizational changes. The data was coded by using open, axial, and selective coding: a) In open coding, distinct concepts and themes were identified for categorization b) Axial coding identified emergent themes between the codes, and c) Selective coding used the data from axial coding to integrate categories in cohesive expressions (Williams & Moser, 2019). Open coding was used to create a rich understanding of how transformational leaders impact commitment to organizational change. The data was coded by using open coding to analyze the data from the interview transcripts and code themes to create a rich understanding of how transformational leaders impact commitment to organizational change. A thematic analysis explained how transformational leaders impact commitment to organizational change. Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research to assess data and identify themes and patterns (Miller, 2023). Several steps were followed to complete the thematic analysis:

- 1) The first step was to become familiar with the data by repeatedly reading and reviewing the data
- 2) The second step was to code and group the data by highlighting themes
- 3) The next step was to assign meaning and define the themes
- 4) The final step was to create a report that documents the themes (Miller, 2023).

The research focused on how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. Qualtrics software is a web-based tool that was used to format and distribute demographic questionnaires. The triangulation method tested validity and provided insight into transformational leadership and its influence on employee commitment. There are several styles of triangulation for qualitative research: data triangulation, methodological triangulation, theory/perspective triangulation, and investigator (Roulston, 2018). The research used *methodological triangulation* by using a demographic questionnaires, individual interviews and field notes to conduct the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions determine the way researchers perceive reality, knowledge and research methods (Yusoff & Rahman, 2024). Those assumptions influence how researchers interpret findings, approach data collection and analysis, and conceptualize reality. Four basic assumptions existed in the study. The selected qualitative approach was a case study based on the assumption that 18 participants were the appropriate sample size, including 10 participants from the employee group and eight from the leader group. To ensure 18 participants were the appropriate sample size, the data was analyzed to determine saturation. The second assumption was that a demographic questionnaire and interviews were appropriate structural methods for the qualitative case study. Demographic questionnaire and interviews were determined to be

appropriate structural methods for the qualitative case study because questionnaires and interviews are structural methods used in qualitative studies to gather data and provide insight on research topics (Afolayan & Oniyinde, 2019). The third assumption was that participants would answer the interview questions truthfully and honestly. To encourage participants to answer the interview questions truthfully and honestly, each participant was advised of their right to privacy, including a confidentiality agreement that ensured their identity would be protected during and after the research study regardless of their responses to the questions. A fourth assumption was that the participants would refrain from personal biases and respond to the interview questions with perspectives based on their own experiences. The interview questions were open-ended and structured, to ensure participants responded to the interview questions with perspectives based on their own experiences.

Limitations

A limitation of the qualitative case study was the potential weaknesses with the interviews due to the participants' self-reported experiences and how they narrate those events. The participants may focus more on their positive experiences rather than the difficulties of their challenging moments, which can contradict the overall study. A mitigation that helped limit the challenges of the interview responses was to reassure the participants that they had the right to privacy regardless of their responses to the questions. Another limitation was that some participants may have technological restraints or limitations. A mitigation was to allow the participant to reschedule their interview after resolving the technological issues. Another limitation was that the participants may decide they would not want to proceed with the interviewing process, which can interfere with time restraints. To mitigate this, the

participants in the study were reassured that participation was not mandatory and they could stop the interview at any time.

Delimitations

A paucity of research from the healthcare expert's perspective addresses how change resistance is present when leaders do not demonstrate transformational leadership behavior. A delimitation that would limit the scope of practice is selecting healthcare professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. By conducting research with a specified population sample in a designated geographical location, the study was completed within an adequate timeframe. Another delimitation was adopting transformational leadership theory as the theoretical framework. Transformational leadership theory served as a foundation because the theoretical framework helped understand the phenomena of the study. Another limitation was the choice to use open-ended interview questions, which provided detailed answers to the research questions, rather than closed Likert scale responses that often result in unclear yes or no answers.

Ethical Assurances

The qualitative research study received approval from National University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before collecting data. Once the IRB application was approved, the recruitment process started. The participants reviewed a consent form via email before the interview. The informed consent ensured that the participants agreed to participate in the study and allowed them to ask questions about the study. Each participant had a right to privacy, including a confidentiality agreement to ensure their identity was protected during and after the research study. After the participants were recruited for the study, the participant's information was de-identified and securely stored in accordance with IRB requirements. The data will be securely stored for up to three years after completing the study.

The data will be destroyed once the storage time has reached the allotted timeframe. The researcher was responsible for conducting the study, protecting the rights of the participants, updating the IRB of any changes to the protocol, and securely maintaining all records related to the study.

Research studies can occasionally face problems like researcher bias, where the person conducting the study may interpret the data in a way that favors their own theory. Social acceptability bias is another form of bias that arises when participants answer questions imprecisely because they want to be accepted based on their responses. Researcher bias and social acceptability bias was prevented by considering genuine data with an unbiased mindset and phrasing the interview questions to allow participants to feel accepted regardless of their answers. Bracketing is a method that is used in qualitative studies to alleviate detrimental results that may impair the research process (Baksh, 2018). A bracketing method that was used to mitigate researcher bias is known as reflexivity. Reflexivity is when the researcher understands their personal views and impact on the research (Baksh, 2018). The Belmont report was referenced as a guideline for protecting human subjects during research. The Belmont report identified ethical principles that focus on ethical issues that arise from conducting research with human subjects (Pritchard, 2021).

Summary

A qualitative research method was selected for the case study because a qualitative methodology identifies real-world problems and a case study design will explain workplace behaviors from personal encounters (Tomaszewski et al., 2020; Hancock et al., 2021). Social media platforms such as LinkedIn was used to recruit 18 healthcare professionals in North Carolina to examine the impact of transformational leadership behavior and how

transformational leaders influence employee commitment to change. Interviewing a leader group and an employee group was appropriate for the research because the study examined how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment. Interviews and a demographic questionnaire were instruments used to conduct the study. Qualtrics was used to develop the demographic questionnaire and the interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams as a virtual interview option. The participants received an interview protocol guide and consent forms before the interview. Once the interview was concluded, each participant was rewarded for participating in the study with a gift card. The research data was analyzed using NVivo to compare the data to related themes. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes and patterns. The research data was coded using open coding to integrate categories. A triangulation method was used to test the validity of the study. Chapter 4 discusses trustworthiness of the data, results of the study, common themes and concludes with an evaluation of the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are often caused by a lack of transformational leadership during the implementation of change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. This study aimed to examine the findings from an interpretive perspective, utilizing data collection methods such as interviews and a questionnaire to support the data revealed by the participants' experiences. The study examined the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational change behaviors and how transformational change can impact the change process and improve employee commitment. The research questions that were addressed in the study were:

RQ1

How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ2

How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ3

What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

This chapter examined the results and analysis of data obtained from the participants' interviews. The data summarized in the following section includes steps that were taken with

caution to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Each participant completed a Qualtrics demographic questionnaire that addressed work history, age, level of education and demographic location to determine their eligibility before attending an individual online interview via Microsoft Teams. The data from this study was coded through NVivo software and compared to related themes that answered the research questions involving the challenges organizations face during change efforts and employee resistance to changes. Thematic analysis is a commonly used approach in qualitative research that assesses data, identifies themes and examines patterns that describe specific phenomena and answer questions related to social experiences (Miller, 2023). Through thematic analysis, themes and patterns were identified that explained how transformational leaders impact commitment to organizational change. The study's assumptions, limitations and delimitations were examined to ensure ethical assurance. The results from the study were structured based on the interview questions that addressed the research questions. This chapter concludes with an evaluation of the findings and a summary of the results.

Trustworthiness Of the Data

For the trustworthiness of data, researchers Lincoln and Guba relied on the four general elements of trustworthiness within their qualitative research study (Stahl & King, 2020). The four elements of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first element of trustworthiness is credibility, which is developed by engaging in research over an extended period, persistently observing data, and using triangulation to test validity (Ahmed, 2024). Transferability is the second component of trustworthiness, which draws data from specific individuals, environmental settings, and time periods from people who have not been directly studied (Drisko, 2025). The third component of trustworthiness in qualitative research is dependability, which refers to the replication of research

data and its consistency, ensuring trustworthiness (Kakar et al., 2023). Confirmability is the fourth criterion of trustworthiness, which is established by classifying the data and findings in a manner that confirms the accuracy of the information (Nassaji, 2020). Stahl and King (2020) postulate that qualitative research provides researchers with specific procedures that create trustworthiness within their research activity.

Credibility

Credibility involves ensuring that the findings are accurate and consistent with reality. Credibility is vital in qualitative research because it influences the accuracy and appropriateness of the methods, procedures, and interpretations used in a study, as well as the generalizability or transferability of the findings to other settings or groups (Drisko, 2025). Credibility is also a key component of trustworthiness and rigor in qualitative research. Credibility is typically established through various strategies, including prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, thick description and peer debriefing (Stahl & King, 2020). According to Wood et al. (2020), credibility is important in qualitative research because it influences the level of confidence in the data and its interpretation.

To strengthen the credibility of the study, several techniques were implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. These methods included the use of triangulation by gathering information from demographic questionnaires, conducting individual interviews, and compiling field notes. The demographic questionnaire was developed by using Qualtrics software, a web-based tool designed to format data, distribute surveys, and analyze participant responses (Molnar, 2019). The demographic questionnaire included the participant's age, years of experience working at the organization and education level. This study employed in-depth structured interviews by using Microsoft Teams to conduct virtual interviews. The interviews

took approximately 30 minutes to complete with each participant. The third credibility technique that was used to establish trustworthiness was field notes. The field notes included methodological notes on the research process, such as the date, time, location and participant activities.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which findings can be applied or adapted to other settings, groups, or contexts (Drisko, 2025). Transferability is one of the key criteria for evaluating the generalizability of qualitative research, and it is often associated with credibility, validity, and reliability. Transferability is a significant aspect in qualitative research, as it determines the applicability of the findings to other situations or populations, as well as the usefulness and impact of the results for practice or policy (Stahl & King, 2020). Transferability enhances the credibility of qualitative research by allowing insights to inform practice and theory beyond the original study setting (Drisko, 2025). The researcher's responsibility is to provide sufficient, detailed and contextual information, often referred to as "thick description," so that readers can determine whether the findings are applicable to other situations (Stahl & King, 2020, p. 27). Therefore, qualitative researchers aim to enhance the transferability of their studies by employing various methods and techniques that increase the richness and depth of their data and analysis.

Transferability was demonstrated by using an audit trail to reveal rich data about the participants' experiences related to transformational leadership, employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. For example, the interviews were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams to capture rich data on the participants' responses based on their experiences. Each participant granted permission to record and transcribe the interview during

the interview protocol process and review of the consent form. Transferability was also established through thick descriptions that provided in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences. Open-ended questions were used to obtain detailed information regarding transformational leadership, employee commitment, and organizational behaviors. The open-ended interview questions ensured that the participants' responses were in-depth, rather than vague responses that required probing.

Dependability

Dependability focuses on the products and results of a qualitative study to determine if the data is consistent and how well it is documented and justified (Kakar et al., 2023). Dependability can be addressed by using rigorous and transparent methods, such as clearly describing the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures, and by providing evidence of the decisions and reflections made during the research (Stahl & King, 2020). Additionally, techniques such as audit trails, peer review, external audits, and triangulation can also help to establish dependability (Kakar et al., 2023). This study established dependability by using the same recruitment process, interview protocol guide, interview questions and data analysis process. The recruitment process involved sending a recruitment email to all participants, which outlined the eligibility requirements and listed the activities to be completed during the study. The interview protocol guide was communicated at the beginning of each interview, informing participant about the process before, during, and after the interview. The same interview questions were asked amongst the leadership group and the employee group. The same coding process was used to code each interview transcript through NVivo.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the results of a study are shaped by the participants' own experiences and ideas, rather than by the researcher's biases, motivations, or interests (Nassaji, 2020). Confirmability emphasizes the importance of transparency in the examination process, ensuring that the results accurately reflect the participants' responses rather than the researcher's preconceptions. Addressing confirmability is one of the criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research, along with transferability, credibility, dependability, and authenticity (Stahl & King, 2020). This researcher ensured confirmability by maintaining an unbiased approach through reflective journaling, which helped remove personal feelings and opinions. The reflective journal included thoughts, experiences and feelings throughout the research process. By ensuring confirmability, this qualitative research enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings by reducing subjectivity.

Results

After receiving IRB approval from National University, the participants were recruited by using a *purposive sampling* method to select participants with distinctive experiences associated with the research questions (Bullard, 2023). The purposive sampling technique helped identify and recruit participants who provided rich data to enhance the research findings. The sample size for this qualitative study consisted of 18 employees, which included eight participants from the leader group and ten participants from the employee group. Participants were recruited by email from two healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The recruitment email included the eligibility requirements, the research activities and a link to the Qualtrics Demographic Questionnaire.

The eligibility requirements for the leader group were that the participants were a) 18 years or older, b) worked in a healthcare organization in North Carolina, c) had supervisory experience for five or more employees, and d) had been in a leadership role for at least six months. The eligibility requirements for the employee group were that participants a) had to be 18 years or older, b) worked in the healthcare industry in North Carolina, and c) had to be employed with the healthcare organization for at least six months. The participants sent a confirmation email once they completed the demographic questionnaire, and then an email was sent to the participants requesting dates and times to complete the interview. The email had a consent letter attached, confirming their understanding of the research purpose and topic before the interview began.

Prior to conducting the interview, each participant was advised of their right to privacy, including a confidentiality agreement that ensured their identity would be protected during and after the research study. The participants were de-identified in accordance with IRB requirements to protect their confidentiality. To ensure the collection of rich and unbiased data, the interview protocol was carefully designed to minimize potential biases. A standardized script was followed throughout each interview, providing participants with the opportunity to openly share their personal beliefs and capture authentic perspectives from each participant. The individual interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and lasted approximately 30 minutes with each participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed live in Microsoft Teams at the time of the interview.

After the interview was completed, the participants were reassured of the confidentiality of the interview and were informed when they would receive the interview transcripts. Participants were sent the interview transcripts immediately after the interview. Each participant

was compensated with a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon for participating in the study. The data was analyzed in NVivo software to capture related themes about challenges organizations experience during change and employee resistance to organizational changes. The interview responses were used to categorize recurrent themes that emerged from the data and answered the research questions.

The demographic questionnaire consisted of three demographics: age, years of work experience, and level of education for 18 participants. By age range, all 18 participants (100%) were 18 years or older. According to the statistical data for work experience, four participants (22%) had 1 - 3 years of work experience in the healthcare field, four participants (22%) had 4 - 6 years of work experience in the healthcare field, and ten participants (56%) had over 7 years of work experience in the healthcare field. The level of education was classified into three different levels: high school diploma, undergraduate degree, and graduate degree. Three participants (17%) had a high school diploma, six participants (33%) had an undergraduate degree, and nine participants (50%) had a graduate degree. Table 3 highlights the participants' demographics information.

Table 3

Participants Demographics

Participant	Age	Years of Work Experience	Level of Education
P1	18 years or older	1 – 3 Years	Graduate Degree
P2	18 years or older	1 – 3 Years	Graduate Degree
P3	18 years or older	1 – 3 Years	Graduate Degree
P4	18 years or older	1 – 3 Years	Graduate Degree

P5	18 years or older	4 – 6 Years	High School Diploma
P6	18 years or older	4 – 6 Years	Graduate Degree
P7	18 years or older	4 – 6 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P9	18 years or older	4 – 6 Years	High School Diploma
P8	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	High School Diploma
P10	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P11	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Graduate Degree
P12	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P13	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P14	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P15	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Undergraduate Degree
P16	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Graduate Degree
P17	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Graduate Degree
P18	18 years or older	Over 7 Years	Graduate Degree

Research Question 1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

For RQ1, the findings revealed three themes that result in an increase of employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals based on transformational leadership behaviors. The themes were: Theme 1: Communication; Theme 2: Collaboration in Decision-Making Process; and Theme 3: Motivation. The factors relating to Theme 1: Communication, consisted of two subthemes which were open communication and effective communication. The

factors regarding Theme 2: Collaboration in Decision-Making Process, consisted of two subthemes which were participation and collaboration. The factors involving Theme 3: Motivation, consisted of two subthemes which were individual consideration and inspiration. Table 4 outlines the codes that emerged from participants responses on how transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment.

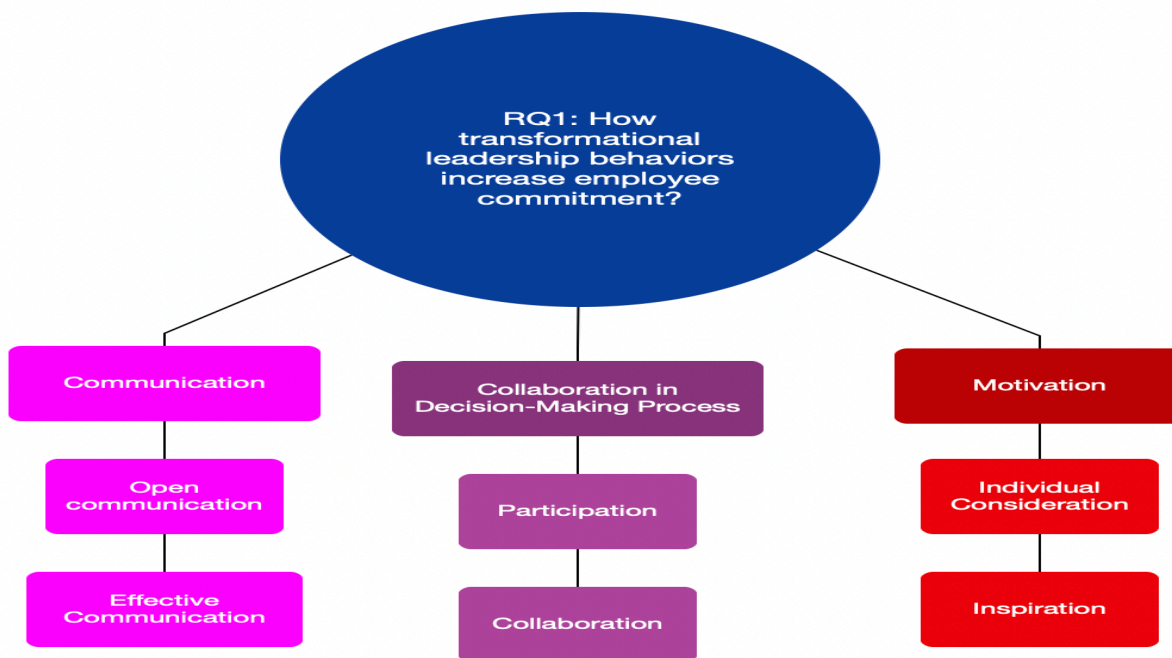
Table 4

Research Question 1 Codes used in NVivo

Primary Themes	Subthemes	File	References
Communication	Open Communication	10	8
	Effective Communication		
Collaboration in Decision-Making Process	Participation	6	5
	Collaboration		
Motivation	Individual Consideration	8	10
	Inspiration		

Figure 5 illustrates a mind map of themes that emerged from the data gathered from participants' responses to Research Question 1.

Figure 5

Research Question 1 – Mind Map

Theme 1: Communication. The first theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was communication. The responses revealed factors that discussed how transformational leadership increased employee commitment. Based on the findings, communication emerged as a key theme, along with two subthemes: open communication and effective communication. The participants reported that effective communication, including open communication, contributed to an increase in their commitment. A question asked of the participants, “what type of transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment” prompted the participants to indicate that communication was a prominent cause of the increase in their commitment level. Eight participants out of 18 participants (P3, P7, P8, P9, P14, P15, P17 and P18; 44%), expressed

communication influences were factors resulting in an increase in their commitment level to their job profession within healthcare.

Subtheme 1.1 Open communication. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 1 was open communication. The following participants discussed how open communication increased their commitment levels as employees. P3 expressed that being aware of the change that is going to be implemented helped increase their commitment level saying that “Making sure that everyone was aware of the change, so making sure that the communication went out and everyone was aware that the flow may change and answering any questions.” P7 expressed that they had a great transition with organizational change due to open communication, stating that “We had a great transition as we worked through it, and it was all because the communication was there.” P9 also mentions open communication by saying that “the biggest thing is just providing that open line of communication and the avenue for people, whether it's just needing to vent or to talk something through.” P15 further expands on open communication by citing that leaders should “have an open line of communication with the employees so that they can reach the common goal.” The second subcategory that emerged from the communication theme was effective communication.

Subtheme 1.2 Effective communication. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 1 was effective communication. P8 expressed how effective communication from their organizational leader had a positive influence on their commitment level saying that “If they are an effective leader or have effective communication styles or tend to have a positive influence on those they lead, then I would say that would even further the change.” Citing the views of P14 on how higher levels of communication are motivational “The higher level of communication

regarding the changes is what's really been helpful in motivating me.” Additionally, P17 also mention how effective communication improves employee commitment stating that:

Transformational change can improve employee commitment by having leaders that are understanding, having leaders that you can communicate with and people who actually care about you as an employee and they don't see you as another person in the company.

P18 further explains that leaders influence employee commitment by “how they communicate, communication is the biggest key.” The second theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was collaboration in the decision-making process.

Theme 2: Collaboration in the Decision-Making Process. The second theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was collaboration in the decision-making process. Five out of 18 (27%), participants (P5, P6, P11, P12 and P18) mentioned collaboration in the decision-making process as a factor that increased their commitment level to their job profession within healthcare. The participants reported that being included in the decision-making process of the organizational change increased their commitment level. Based on the findings, collaboration in the decision-making process emerged as a key theme, along with two subthemes: participation and collaboration. Participants stated that when their leaders allow them to participate in the change process, they are more committed to the new changes. Participants also reported feeling more committed when the leaders collaborated with them during organizational changes.

Subtheme 2.1 Participation. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 2 was participation. The participants revealed that participating in the decision-making process had increased their commitment level to their job role. P6 expressed how their experience with change was a positive experience from a leader’s perspective by allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process:

We can make sure that this is going to be palatable for them, letting them in on how this new space would be set up, letting them choose some of the design features of this new space, help to engage them instead of me just saying, hey, this is where you're going and this is what we're going to do.

P5 is another leader who expressed the importance of participation by stating that “getting them to participate in that decision so that you're able to get what you need out of that event or program or whatever the outcome is you're looking for.” P11 cited their view of participation from an employee perspective by saying, “I believe it was a positive impact because I was able to express more ideas.” P12 further stated, “I think people want to belong to an organization that empowers them and allows them the ability to participate.” The second subcategory that emerged from Collaboration in the decision-making process theme was collaboration.

Subtheme 2.2 Collaboration. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 2 was collaboration. The participants revealed that collaborating with their leaders during the decision-making process contributed to the increase in their commitment level. P6 mentioned that as a leader, it is helpful to collaborate with others to get their perspective and ensure good outcomes:

You have to get buy-in from that colleague, team member or person that you're supervising, so that they will actually have something invested in the outcomes, so that you can ensure that you get good outcome as a good representation of their perspective.

P11 mentioned their experience with collaboration by discussing how “it was nice to be able to come up with a more creative way to say certain things or to get those certain points across.” P18 further stated that “Sometimes, including your employees or your staff in the

decisions being made” has a significant influence on their commitment level. The third theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was motivation.

Theme 3: Motivation. The third theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was motivation. Ten participants out of 18 (55%) (P1, P5, P6, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15, P17 and P18) stated that motivation contributed to increased commitment to their role in healthcare.

Motivation was the key theme that emerged from this study, with two subthemes: Individual Consideration and Inspiration. The participants reported feeling motivated through individual consideration and inspiration, which are dimensions of transformational leadership. Inspirational motivation focuses on motivating employees to commit to organizational goals; individual consideration fosters supportive relationships (Bass, 1999). The following statements are the voices of the participants, expressing their experience with motivation. P1 said that “If the employees understand what their role is, it increases their likelihood of being motivated.” P17 also mentioned how they “Feel like leaders should be able to motivate employees.”

P15 further elaborates on motivation by expressing how “Seeing involvement makes me, as an employee, want to work harder or work for that individual, it motivates me to perform my job tasks.” P11 talked about how motivation causes less stress, stating that “Motivating the staff, I think, makes everyone's life easier and ultimately less stressful.” P11 also talked about how understanding the process is motivating, saying, “Understanding the process of how someone does something, I think, really gives you a little bit extra motivation.” P14 voiced similar claims by stating that “Understanding the why behind the changes and how it's improving the process of these exams and improving outcomes has really helped me adapt to the changes and be motivated.” P5 further elaborated on motivation by providing an example of a project that is

implemented to motivate staff by sharing how “One of our bigger projects that we do that is the most taxing for my team is to ask them what they need, what is a motivation for them.”

Subtheme 3.1 Individual Consideration. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 3 was individual consideration. As one of the four dimensions of transformational leadership, individual consideration is when leaders focus on each follower's emotional needs and achievements (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Bass, 2009). P5 consider the employees emotional needs by engaging with the employees' who seem to be disengaged by expressing that “Recognizing that flow of conversation and watching the people who were not as engaged to see what I needed to do to get them engaged.” P6 also focuses on emotional needs through individual consideration by stating how “I think the commitment level is through engagement, finding the strengths of employees, like identifying what their strengths are and making sure that tasks that are assigned to them align with their strengths.” Another form of individual consideration is using a mentorship style to coach others, as P10 noted, “He motivated me because he trained us, and he was in the trenches with us.” P6 further provided an example of how they considered emotional needs by offering moral support to staff saying, “We have a morale committee here at the Health Center that focuses on just making sure that employees feel seen, they feel heard.”

Subtheme 3.2 Inspiration. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 3 was inspiration. The participants discussed how being inspired has increased their commitment level to their job role. P14 talks about their experience with feeling inspired from understanding the reason for changes that occur within the organization by expressing “When leaders use inspirational motivation, it helps employees really understand the why behind the change.” P17 express their opinion about how they feel that leaders “Have to be able to motivate and they have

to be able to inspire.” P18 further elaborated by saying “They had things to inspire their employees and motivate one another, not only with meetings but there were outside things that they did to promote the work between peers of that particular organization.”

Three themes emerged, revealing an increase in employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals, based on transformational leadership behaviors. The results from Theme 1: communication, corroborate with existing literature that proves transformational leaders govern the success of organizational change and commitment by communicating a clear vision of organizational goals to their followers (Henricks et al., 2020). Theme 2: collaboration in the decision-making process supports James MacGregor Burns' theoretical framework, which suggests that transformational leaders encourage innovations that stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills by including members in decision-making to improve the organization's overall success (Burns, 1978). Theme 3: motivation, confirms the existing literature that has linked transformational leadership to individual performance and innovative behavior, which influences employee commitment to change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Wang, 2022). As a result, transformational leaders accomplish organizational goals by communicating a clear vision of the change, including employees in the decision-making process, and exhibiting inspirational motivation.

Research Question 2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

There were two themes for Research Question 2 that emerged from the findings on how transformational change can improve employee commitment. The two themes were Theme 4: Leaders who Serve as a Role Model During the Change Process; and Theme 5: Employee Involvement in the Change Process. For Theme 4: Leaders who Serve as a Role Model during

the Change Process, there were two subthemes which were lead by example and model change behavior. The two subthemes for Theme 5: Employee Involvement in the Change Process were leadership involvement and employees' desire for leadership involvement. Table 5 outlines the codes that reflected factors that improved employee commitment based on transformational change behavior.

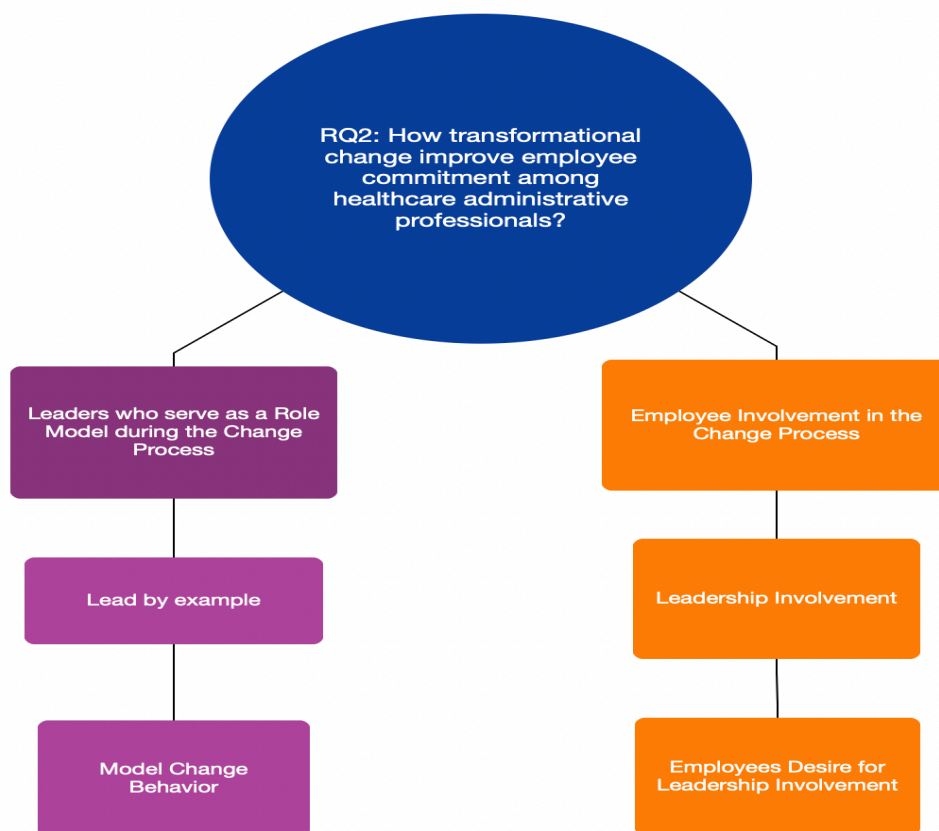
Table 5

Research Question 2 Codes Used in NVivo

Primary Themes	Subthemes	File	References
Leaders who serve as a Role Model during the Change Process	Lead by Example	5	4
	Model Change Behavior		
Employee Involvement in the Change Process	Leadership Involvement	7	4
	Employees Desire for Leadership Involvement		

Figure 6 illustrates a mind map of themes that emerged from the data gathered from participants' responses to Research Question 2.

Figure 6

Research Question 2 – Mind Map

Theme 4: Leaders who Serve as a Role Model During the Change Process. The first theme that emerged from Research Question 2 was leaders who serve as a role model during the change process. The participants' responses revealed some factors that disclosed how transformational change improves employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals. Based on the findings, leaders who serve as role models during the change process emerged as a key theme, along with two subthemes which were led by example and model change behavior. The participants reported that leaders who lead by example and model change behavior contributed to an improvement in their commitment. A question asked of the

participants, “How do you feel transformational change can improve employee commitment,” prompted the participants to indicate that being led by example was a prominent cause of an improvement in their commitment.

Subtheme 4.1 Lead by Example. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 4 was lead by example. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P7, P13, P16, and P17) expressed that leading by example resulted in an improvement in employee commitment during transformational change. P7 expressed how they lead by example from a leadership’s perspective, stating that “I show them my commitment to the job and the responsibilities that I have, so I pretty much lead by example.” P13 also spoke from a leader’s perspective by saying, “I think showing someone a process or a way and then showing the benefits of that process is very important. Win the person over to your way of thinking or to your process.” P16 said that “if you lead by example and show them you know with the commitment, the payoff is what the goal is.” P17 discussed their experience from an employee’s perspective by stating that “leaders impact the change process by leading by example.” P17 further elaborated by also mentioning that “They should be able to navigate and have tools we can use to still be able to do our job duties.” The second subcategory that emerged from leaders who serve as role models during the change process was model change behavior.

Subtheme 4.2 Model Change Behavior. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 4 was model change behavior. The following participants discussed how modeling change behavior improved their commitment during transformational change. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P2, P6, P13 and P15) mentioned that there was an improvement in commitment from both employee and leader perspectives when modeling change behavior. P2 mentioned how they improve employee commitment from a leader’s perspective:

By constantly being here, constantly being on time, constantly meeting the aspects of what my job requires and just pretty much showing them that I'm not going to ask them to do something that I'm not going to do myself.

P6 was another leader who also spoke from a leadership perspective on how they improved commitment during transformation change through modeling change behavior, saying:

I think you have to model what you want to see employees doing, so if you are someone who wants to make sure that you are creating a teamwork type of environment, then you have to be willing and able to do teamwork type activities. So, if an employee needs some assistance and you're able to provide that type of assistance, you as a leader are willing to do what you have to do to make sure that the job gets done.

P13 further elaborated by stating that as a leader, "I think showing someone a process or a way and then showing the benefits of that process is very important." P13 also said, "I think that if you can win the person over to your way of thinking or to your process or to your plan, I think it's a better way than dictating it." Furthermore, P15 is an employee who mentioned that leaders who model change behavior improved their commitment, by saying "I look at the leaders as role models and are someone of authority, and I also look at them as someone who is integral to the part of the team." The fifth theme that emerged from Research Question 2 was employee involvement in the change process during transformational change.

Theme 5: Employee Involvement in the Change Process. The fifth theme that emerged from Research Question 2 was employee involvement in the change process during transformational change. The participants' responses revealed some factors that disclosed how transformational change improved employee commitment through employee involvement during the change process. Based on the findings, employee involvement in the change process emerged

as a key theme, along with two subthemes: leadership involvement and employees' desire for leadership involvement. Some participants reported that, as leaders, when they are involved during the change process, it improves employee commitment. Other participants mentioned that as employees, leadership involvement improved their commitment during the change process. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P1, P2, P6, and P9) expressed that their involvement as leaders contributed to an improvement in employee commitment during the change process.

Subtheme 5.1 Leadership Involvement. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 5 was leadership involvement. The following participant discussed how their involvement as leaders improved commitment during transformational change. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P1, P2, P6, and P9) expressed that their involvement as leaders contributed to an improvement in employee commitment during the change process. P1 discussed their leadership involvement and how they improve commitment by stating that "Employees will see that if I'm taking patients or taking phone calls about patients, they're willing to do more for me." P2 also mentioned how their involvement as a leader improves commitment by stating, "I'm going to take on responsibilities just like y'all are going to have to take on more responsibilities." P2 further elaborate son their involvement as a leader by saying, "Instead of trying to be a boss around or tell people constantly what to do, actually engage with them to do it with them, show them that you're not afraid to do what they're doing." P6 expressed that there was a positive change within the organization, "By putting that team together to work collaboratively." P9 further elaborates on leadership involvement, stating that "I think sometimes when they know the why behind it, specifically the why we changed the SHA's and knowing that I am here and that we are willing to help them has really helped get them to focus." The second subcategory that emerged from the key theme: employee involvement in the change process was employees desire for leadership

involvement. Six participants out of 18 (33%) (P8, P10, P11, P14, P15 and P17) expressed that having leadership involvement during the change process contributed to an improvement in their commitment during the change process.

Subtheme 5.2 Employees Desire for Leadership Involvement. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 5 was employees desire for leadership involvement. Six out of 18 participants (33%) (P8, P10, P11, P14, P15 and P17) expressed that having leadership involvement during the change process contributed to an improvement in their commitment. P8 mentioned being under a leader who she saw as a mentor, stating that the leader was “visible in the clinic.” P10 spoke on their experience as a nurse in the military, saying that “soldiers wanted to see their leaders actually participating with them.” P11 stated that “Any manager or anyone in a leadership position has some effect on motivation and that kind of thing, so if someone can help when there's a big change going on.” P14 also stated that “Having a more hands-on manager that I know personally and have discussions with or meetings with has helped increase my motivation at work.” P15 said, “I prefer a leadership that is involved.” P15 further elaborated by also saying, “involvement is retention, it is employee retention, increasing morale.” P17 concludes by saying “Having leaders that were willing to help, even though I had already went through weeks of training, had immediately made me feel more committed.”

Two themes emerged, revealing how transformational change improves employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals. Theme 4: Leaders who serve as role models during the change process revealed that leaders improve employee commitment by exhibiting idealized influences. Current literature suggests that when leaders exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, such as idealized influence, they earn the trust and respect of followers who internalize their high morals and ethical standards (Murari & Mukherjee,

2021). Theme 5: Employee Involvement in the Change Process confirms that leaders improve employee commitment by involving employees in the change process. Employee commitment has been defined as an employee's involvement with organizational development (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Employees trust their leaders who demonstrate supportive behaviors, such as involvement during the change process, which leads to employee commitment (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021).

Research Question 3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

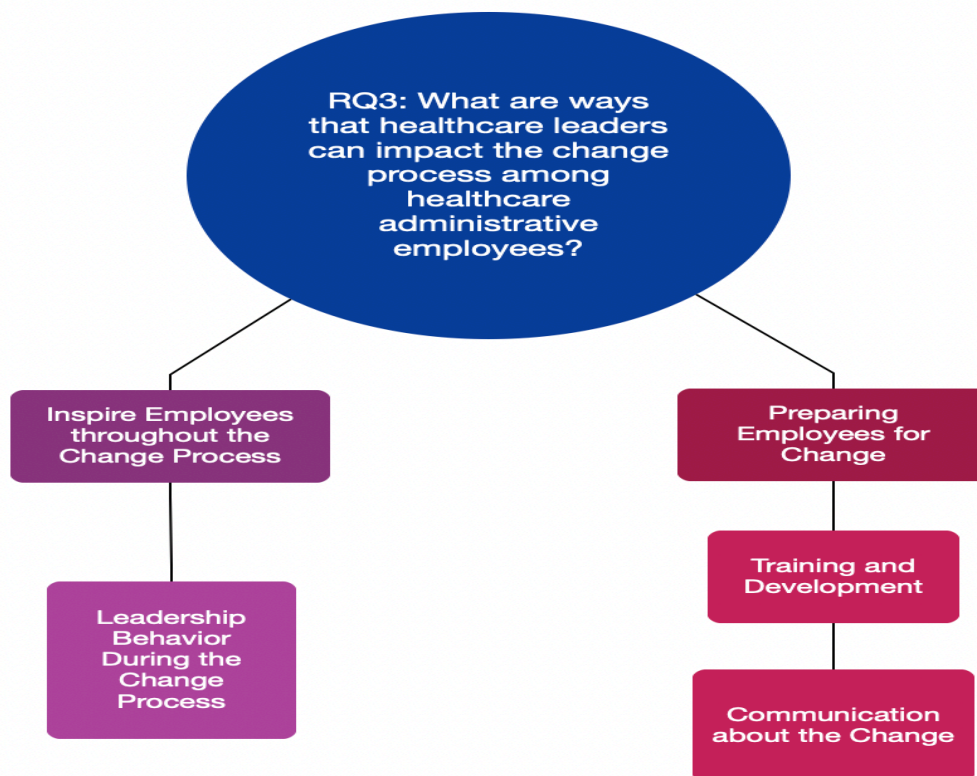
For the third research question, two central themes emerged that highlight the ways in which healthcare leaders influence the change process for healthcare administrative employees: inspiring employees throughout the change process and preparing employees for change. The two themes were Theme 6: Inspire Employees throughout the Change Process and Theme 7: Preparing Employees for Change. There was one subtheme for Theme 6 which was leadership behavior during the change process. For Theme 7, the two subthemes were training and development and communication about the change. Table 6 outlines the codes that emerged from the data on how leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees.

Table 6*Research Question 3 Codes Used in NVivo*

Primary Theme	Subthemes	File	References
Inspire Employees throughout the Change Process	Leadership Behavior During the Change	5	6
Preparing Employees for Change	Training and Development Communication about the Change	8	4

Figure 7 illustrates a mind map of themes that emerged from the data gathered from participants' responses to Research Question 3.

Figure 7

Research Question 3 – Mind Map

Theme 6: Inspire Employees through the Change Process. The first theme that emerged from Research Question 3 was to inspire employees throughout the change process. The participants' responses revealed some factors that disclosed ways healthcare leaders can impact healthcare administrative employees by inspiring employees through the change process. Based on the findings, inspiring employees throughout the change process emerged as a key theme, along with one subtheme: Leadership Behavior During the Change Process. The participants described how they inspired employees as leaders throughout the change process by demonstrating specific behavior. A question asked of the participants, "What ways do leaders impact the change process," prompted the participants to indicate that inspiring employees

throughout the change process and leadership behavior had an impact on the change process. Six participants out of 18 (33%) (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7 and P8) described ways they inspire employees throughout the change process based on the leadership behavior they demonstrate during the change process.

Subtheme 6.1 Leadership Behavior During the Change Process. The subtheme that emerged from Theme 6 was leadership behavior during the change process. The following participant discussed how their behavior as leaders during the change impacted the change process among healthcare administrative employees. Six participants out of 18 (33%) (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7 and P8) provided accounts for their experience. P2 mentioned that engaging with the employees had an impact on the change process, stating that, “Being respectful, not trying to be a boss around and tell people constantly what to do, but actually engage with them.” P6 also mentioned engagement, saying, “Engage them instead of me just saying, this is what we're going to do.” P6 also identified employees’ strengths by “making sure that tasks are assigned with their strengths.” P3 mentioned they have a morale committee saying, “We make sure that we try to keep morale up here. So, we have a morale committee, and I am one of those people who sit on the morale committee.” P5 discussed how they impact the change process by stating:

I continually try to work on being a better listener, so that I can hear the needs each person brings to the table, as well as seeing their potential to do even greater things than what they believe they're even capable of and to approach them with the open lens and try to avoid as many of our biases that we bring to the table.

P7 talked about their impact on the change process by providing encouragement, stating, “I make sure I go to workshops, and I encourage them to do the same.” P8 mentioned

communication with employees, saying, “Round table type discussions at least once a month, maybe more than that,” impacted the change process.

Theme 7: Preparing Employees for Change. The second theme that emerged from Research Question 3 was preparing employees for change. The participants’ responses revealed some factors that disclosed ways healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees by preparing employees for change. Based on the findings, preparing employees for change emerged as a key theme, along with two subthemes: training and development, and communication about the change. The participants described how they prepared employees for change by providing training and offering communication about the change. A question asked of the participants from the leaders’ group, “How did you fully prepare the employees for the change process” and the employees’ group, “How did your leader fully prepare you for the change process,” prompted the participants to indicate that training and development and communication about the change had an impact on the change process. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P1, P8, P13, and P18) mentioned training as a development tool that helped prepare for change.

Subtheme 7.1 Training and Development. The first subtheme that emerged from Theme 7 was training and development. The following participant mentioned that training and development impacted the change process. Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P1, P8, P13 and P18) cited that providing training was helpful in their development during the change. P1 mentioned running trials as a form of development and a way to prepare employees for the change, citing, “We always do two-week or three-week trials and after the two or three-week trial, we re-evaluate.” P8 said, “We were given training prior to and explained how the process would work and that it would take a certain amount of time.” P13 stated that “Training programs

and training programs we had to read” helped prepare them for change. P18 also reflect that “I did a lot of the training and a lot of times, the management leaders would ask me and other peers that I work with, to ensure that they had the exact information.”

Subtheme 7.2 Communication about the Change. The second subtheme that emerged from Theme 7 was communication about change. Several participants noted that communicating the change helped prepare employees and influenced the process. The following participant mentioned how communication about the change prepared the employees for change, which impacted the change process. The following 11 participants out of 18 (61%) (P1, P3, P6, P9, P10, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16 and P18) provided information about communication during the change process. The leaders were asked, “How did you fully prepare the employees for the change process?” and the employees were asked the question, “How did your leader fully prepare you for the change process?” P1 said, “We give them clear-cut instructions, so they understand why we are doing the change.” P3 stated, “Before the change happened, they were told of what was going to happen.” P6 prepared the employees for a specific change by allowing them to “Talk about the dilemma that we’re in and the concerns.” P9 spoke from a leader’s perspective about how they prepared the employees for the change by sending email communication, saying, “As a network-wide, there was an email sent out to all practitioners.” From an employee’s perspective, P10 stated their leader prepared them for the change by sending email communication, saying, “You get emails on hey, this is coming out and again we have our monthly meeting.” P18 also discussed how their leader provided them with the context of the change, saying:

She would give me just a snippet, not the entire thing, before the official meeting to prepare us that change was coming, so it wasn't like a surprise when we all got the emails

and when we actually sat down and had the full meeting about when the changes were going to happen.

P11 talked about having prior notice about the change, citing, “We definitely had a lot of prior notice from above store management level, and it definitely had us prepared.” P12 mentioned they had an advanced notice about the change, saying, “Fortunately, we had about a six-month lead in.” P14 said they received an explanation about the change, stating their leader “Gave different details, kind of explaining what is being changed, why it is being changed, how we'll see those changes and then kind of what the process is.” P16 further mentioned how they were given an advanced notice, saying, “She gave us notice well in advanced, you know, two to three weeks.” P15 also stated that they received an explanation about the change, saying, “He was explaining why we are changing processes to improve efficiency, to improve turnaround within the separation health examinations and the email was actually very thorough.”

The two themes that emerged from RQ1 revealed ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees. The results from Theme 6: inspire employees through the change process, support the transformational leadership theory, suggesting that leaders inspire employees to achieve organizational outcomes (Zhao et al., 2021). The theory also relates transformational leadership as a partnership in which organizational leaders and employees inspire each other to higher standards. Theme 7: preparing employees for change, corroborates with existing literature that suggests organizations that prepare for change develop employees who are receptive to adapting to changes (Ahmad & Cheng, 2018). Leaders who prepare the organization for change have an impact on employees' commitment during the change process.

Evaluations of Findings

This qualitative case study examined transformational leadership behavior and employee commitment. The study identified the factors that explained how transformational leadership could improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The participants' responses were analyzed to answer three primary questions, RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals? RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals? RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees? The evaluation of the findings revealed seven themes, and 13 subthemes related to the research questions.

RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

Three themes were associated with RQ1: Theme 1: Communication, Theme 2: Collaboration in Decision-making Process, and Theme 3: Motivation. Six subthemes were related to RQ1 which were open communication, effective communication, participation, collaboration, individual consideration, and inspiration. For Theme 1, participants' responses regarding communication were consistent with existing research that suggested that effective communication increases work morale, contributing to job commitment (Kim & Shin, 2019). As a result, employees felt committed to their profession when there was effective communication within the organization, which increases employee retention and organizational growth. For Theme 2, participants' responses regarding collaboration corroborated with existing research that

suggested organizational performance orientation plays a role in relation to transformational leaders and how they influence the acceptance of collaboration as a strategy to address organizational challenges such as change (Campbell, 2018). In Theme 2, participants' responses regarding participation corroborated with existing research that suggested transformational leaders teach their employees how to manage change while involving them in the decision-making of change implementation (Chis-Manolache, 2022). When transformational leaders include their followers in the decision-making process, the leaders encourage innovations that stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills to improve the organization's overall success. For Theme 3, participants' responses regarding motivation confirmed current research that suggested that by motivating employees to perform their duties effectively and conquer challenges, transformational leaders promote employee commitment (Donkor, 2021). In Theme 3, participants' responses regarding individual consideration were aligned with existing research that suggested that transformational leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration foster supportive relationships while encouraging creativity (Jun & Lee, 2023). Also, in Theme 3, participants' responses regarding inspiration were consistent with existing research supporting inspirational motivation, which suggested that transformational leaders can inspire followers to commit to a vision by fostering a sense of purpose (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders use inspiration and motivation to achieve future goals and foresee obstacles that can potentially hinder the organization's vision.

RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

Two themes that were associated with RQ2 were Theme 4: Leaders who serve as a role model during the change process, and Theme 5: Employee Involvement in the Change Process.

Four subthemes were related to RQ2 which were lead by example, model change behavior, leadership involvement, and employees desire for leadership involvement. For Theme 4, participants' responses regarding being led by example were consistent with existing research that suggested transformational leaders with idealized influences gain trust and respect from followers who internalize their high morals and ethical standards, influencing them to follow a line of action by leading by example (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). If leaders lead by example during organizational change, followers will be positively influenced and motivated to maintain a high level of performance during the change process. In Theme 4, participants' responses regarding modeling change behavior corroborated with existing research that suggested transformational leaders should lead by example because employees view their superiors as role models. Idealized influences are role model leaders with extraordinary capabilities who model high principles of ethical conduct (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). Leaders who have idealized influences focus closely on the needs of their followers and avoid using authority as power for personal gain.

In Theme 5, participants' responses regarding leadership involvement confirmed current research that suggested the success of short-term and long-term organizational goals depends on the leader's involvement, teamwork, and clear communication (Rafiq et al., 2022). Organizational success is likely when a trustworthy leader is overseeing the business operations. For Theme 5, participants' responses regarding employees' desire for leadership involvement were aligned with existing research that suggested transformational leadership has been connected to change readiness, employee commitment, and supportive change behavior (Faupel & Süß, 2019). Employees trust their leaders who demonstrate supportive behaviors, such as involvement during the change process, which leads to employee commitment (Heim

& Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Transformational leaders who foster supportive relationships while encouraging creativity understand that everyone is unique and has specific organizational needs.

RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

Two themes were associated with RQ3: Theme 6: Inspire Employees throughout the Change Process, and Theme 7: Preparing Employees for Change. Three subthemes related to RQ3 were leadership behavior during the change process, training and development, and communication about the change. For Theme 6, participants' responses regarding inspiring employees throughout the change process were consistent with existing research that suggested Burns' explanation of the transformational leadership theory component, inspirational motivation, validates how transformational leaders use inspiration and motivation to achieve future goals and foresee obstacles that can potentially hinder the organization's vision (Burns, 1978). The concept of the transformational theory is that once the followers are inspired by their leaders, they are encouraged to change their perceptions and expectations to a higher morality.

For Theme 7, participants' responses regarding preparing employees for change corroborated with existing research that suggested organizations that prepare for change will develop employees who are more accepting of adapting to those changes, which can facilitate employees to commit to future change (Ahmad & Cheng, 2018). Although predicting the future can sometimes be challenging, organizations need to be prepared for possible changes before the change takes place (Gigliotti et al., 2019). Leaders who do not exhibit transformational leadership cause negative attitudes toward change, such as resistance due to the lack of capacity to properly prepare their employees for change readiness (Oreg, 2018). Organizations that are

ready for change avoid impediments that hinder the change process. For Theme 7, participants' responses regarding training and development confirmed current research that suggested transformational leadership plays a role in organizational development to encourage and motivate followers to change for the organization to remain sustainable and adaptable to the business environment (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Ling-Hui Yang (2022) posits that leaders impact the organization's success by inspiring followers to achieve goals through continuous development, such as training programs. Also, in Theme 7, participants' responses regarding communication about the change were aligned with existing research that suggested communicating a clear vision to inspire and engage followers is critical because the primary goal of a transformational leader is to promote development and inspire growth (Henricks et al., 2020). In the context of organizational change, employee attitude significantly depends on transformational leadership behaviors because of their focus on stimulating and inspiring employees to commit to change through compelling visions of the future (Henricks et al., 2020). Transformational leaders govern organizational change by communicating a clear vision of organizational goals to their followers.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented a detailed account of the data collection and analysis procedures, offering substantiated findings that addressed the research questions posed by the study. The trustworthiness of the data revealed the collected data's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The results of the eligibility criteria from the interviews with the 18 participants who worked in healthcare organizations in North Carolina were analyzed and presented. The study revealed seven themes and 13 subthemes that addressed the three research questions. The study findings were examined and reviewed thoroughly, and the results from the data were consistent with existing research and the earlier theoretical framework. The final chapter will discuss the study's implications, recommendations for practice and future research, and the conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Study Summary

The problem to be addressed in this study was that resistance to change and decreased employee commitment are caused by a lack of transformational leadership when implementing change (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals working in healthcare organizations in North Carolina. The research methodology for this study was qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to examine the worldview from an interpretive approach by using data collection such as interviews and questionnaires to support the views of issues prompted by participants (Billups, 2021). The research design used for this qualitative research was a case study. A case study provides an in-depth examination of a suggested population of a distinct circumstance within a designated setting (Hancock et al., 2021). Data was collected through interviews, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that was studied.

This research examined the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment, and organizational change behaviors, making a qualitative case study the most suitable approach. By using a case study, the research addressed the research questions related to transformational leadership behavior, transformational change, and employee commitment within healthcare organizations. A limitation of the qualitative case study was the potential weaknesses with the interviews due to the participants' self-reported experiences and how they narrate those events (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). One limitation of this study was that the data from the participants were self-reported, so the researcher trusted that the participants' responses were honest answers. To mitigate this, the researcher encouraged the participants to provide honest responses during their interview. Another limitation of this study

was the participants' knowledge about the research topic. Some participants lacked an understanding of transformational leadership and transformational leadership behaviors. To address this, the researcher included key terms and definitions for the participants to reference as guidance. The remaining topics that will be discussed in Chapter 5 will include the study's implications, recommendations for practice, and future research. The chapter will conclude with conclusions based on the findings and results of the study.

Implications

The groundwork of this qualitative case study was to determine how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals. The research explored ways transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. The outcome of the findings determined that transformational leadership behavior contributed to the increase in employee commitment during organizational changes. The findings of this study will aid in the fields of transformational leadership, organizational change, and employee commitment to change. Professionals may wish to use this information to improve employee commitment during the organizational change process by demonstrating transformational leadership behavior while implementing changes in the workplace. The implications for the three research questions will be discussed in the information to follow.

Research Question 1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

The results of this study indicated that communication, collaboration in the decision-making process, and motivation are of utmost importance as they relate to ways that transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare

administrative professionals. The success of short-term and long-term organizational goals depends on the cooperation and teamwork of the leader and employees, as well as clear communication. Transformational leaders use their confidence and effective communication to increase work morale, contributing to job commitment (Kim & Shin, 2019). Transformational leaders must openly communicate what they know about the change, including when it will occur and how it will positively affect the organization long term. That open communication will motivate employees to collaborate with their leaders during the change process.

Organizational success is likely when a trustworthy leader is overseeing the business operations. Communicating a clear vision to inspire and engage followers is critical because the primary goal of a transformational leader is to promote development and inspire growth (Henricks et al., 2020). When a transformational leader is transparent while conveying the organization's vision for change, that transparency instills confidence and trust in followers. Based on Lewin's model, leaders can increase employee engagement through strong communication, planning, and knowing what motivates employees (Burnes, 2020). Communication emerged as a crucial factor in increasing employee commitment, along with two subthemes: open communication and effective communication. Eight participants out of 18 participants (44%) expressed that communication influences were factors resulting in an increase in their commitment level to their job profession within healthcare. As a result, employees felt committed to their profession when there was effective and open communication within the organization, which increased employee retention and organizational growth.

There are characteristics of transformational leadership that are intuitively compatible with collaboration, which suggests that collaboration contributes to follower attitudes. The collaborative context related to transformational leadership has improved the line of sight

between organizational outcomes and the contribution to individual performance-relevant outcomes (Campbell, 2018). Collaboration in the decision-making process emerged as an essential factor in increasing employee commitment, along with two subthemes: participation and collaboration. Five participants out of 18 (27%) mentioned that collaboration in the decision-making process increased their commitment level to their job profession within healthcare. As a result, employees felt more committed when their leaders collaborated with them during organizational changes, increasing their commitment level during change.

Motivation is another significant factor in increasing employee commitment because individual behavior and motivational factors are critical to the success of organizational changes. Burns transformational leadership theory described the process of transforming leadership as a procedure in which leaders and followers raise each other to a higher degree of morale and motivation (Roberts, 1985). Transformational leaders who are motivational towards their followers understand the importance of inspiration and how it creates a comfort zone and safety net for those involved in the change. Transformational leaders realize that organizational transformation can cause resistance, so motivational factors such as communication and transparency are significant when engaging followers in the change process (Mansaray, 2019). Motivation developed as a substantial factor in increasing employee commitment with two subthemes: individual consideration and inspiration. Ten participants out of 18 (55%) stated that motivation contributed to increased commitment to their role in healthcare. The participants also reported feeling motivated through individual consideration and inspiration, which are dimensions of transformational leadership. The research confirmed the existing literature that indicates transformational leadership influences employee commitment to change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Wang, 2022).

Transformational leaders and employee commitment are significant factors that impact change initiatives because positive individual and transformational leadership behavior aid successful organizational changes (Islam et al., 2021). The lack of communication from leaders can create a barrier to commitment, resulting in employee resistance, which is a leading cause of why many transformational changes are unsuccessful (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). Leaders should focus on transformational leadership behaviors while implementing organizational changes to avoid resistance to change from employees. By understanding and applying James MacGregor Burns transformational leadership theory, leaders can develop a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters innovations, enhances employees' morale, and commitment to change. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of transformational leadership behaviors and their significant impact on employee commitment.

Research Question 2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

The results of this study also indicated that leaders who serve as role models during the change process and employee involvement in the change process were ranked high in significance that transformational change can improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals. Transformational leaders should lead by example because employees view their superiors as role models. Idealized influence is one of the key dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors that refers to leaders as role models with high morals and principles (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). Leaders who have idealized influences focus closely on the needs of their followers and avoid using authority as a power of personal interest. Transformational leaders with idealized influences gain trust and respect from followers who internalize their high morals and ethical standards, influencing them to follow a line of action by

leading by example (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). If leaders lead by example during organizational change, followers will be positively influenced and motivated to maintain a high level of performance during the change process. However, a leading cause of change resistance in healthcare institutions is the lack of role model leaders (Atieh et al., 2022).

Leaders who serve as role models during the change process emerged as an essential factor in improving employee commitment, in addition to two subthemes: lead by example and model change behavior. Four participants out of 18 (22%) expressed that leading by example resulted in an improvement in employee commitment during transformational change. Four participants out of 18 (22%) mentioned that there was an improvement in commitment from both employee and leader perspectives when modeling change behavior. As a result, leaders who serve as role models contributed to the improvement in employee commitment during transformational change. Transformational leaders who are role models teach their employees how to manage change while involving them in the decision-making of change implementation (Chis-Manolache, 2022). Role modeling positively impact employee commitment to organizational change, which is essential because dedicated staff have less intent to resign, are more visible, and are highly driven to perform at an advanced level.

Furthermore, transformational leaders realize that organizational transformation can cause resistance, so motivational factors are significant when engaging followers in the change process (Mansaray, 2019). Involving employees in the change process entails open communication about the change, which eliminates the fear of the unknown. Commitment is connected to employees' engagement and devotion toward the organization and their intentions to be valued (Park et al., 2022). When transformational leaders do not involve employees in organizational changes, it can become detrimental to implement change because the lack of

engagement can create assumptions about organizational outcomes (Busari et al., 2020).

Employees who are satisfied with their leaders and value them engage more in their organizations during challenging times. Kotter's 8-Step Change Model is a well-known model that consists of eight steps on how to strategically manage change (Eriksson & Fundin, 2018). Step 4 of Kotter's 8-Step model talks about communicating and sharing the vision of the change with others to get them involved in the process.

Employee commitment has been defined as an employee's involvement with organizational development (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Employee involvement developed as a substantial factor in improving employee commitment, along with two subthemes: leadership involvement and employees' desire for leadership involvement. Four participants out of 18 (22%) expressed that their involvement as leaders contributed to an improvement in employee commitment during the change process. Six out of 18 participants (33%) stated that having leadership involvement during the change process contributed to an improvement in their commitment. As a result, leaders who serve as role models and employee involvement in the change process contributed to the improvement in employee commitment during transformational change.

Employees trust their leaders who demonstrate supportive behaviors during the change process, which leads to employee commitment (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). However, when employees have a lack of involvement in the change process, it can create resistance because supportive behaviors play a significant role in the achievement or failure of change initiatives. Leaders should focus on modeling behaviors and involving employees while implementing organizational changes to avoid employee resistance to change. By understanding and applying theories such as Kotter's 8-Step change model and transformational leadership theories, such as

Idealized influence, leaders can develop supportive behaviors that increase employees' commitment to change. These findings reveal the significance of transformational leadership behaviors and their major impact on employee commitment.

Research Question 3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

The results of this study indicated that inspiring employees throughout the change process and preparing employees for change were named as significantly important in terms of ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees. In the context of inspiring employees throughout the change process, employee attitude significantly depends on transformational leadership behaviors because of their focus on stimulating and inspiring employees to commit to change (Henricks et al., 2020). Burns created the transformational leadership theory to explain how transformational leaders inspire their followers in a way that encourages them to navigate innovations by going beyond the call of duty (Givens, 2008). Burns explains the last component of the theory as *inspirational motivation*, in which a leader can inspire followers to commit to a vision by fostering a sense of purpose (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders use inspiration and motivation to achieve future goals and foresee obstacles that can potentially hinder the organization's vision. Additionally, preparation for change by providing training and development initiatives is another way healthcare leaders impact the change process. Ling-Hui Yang (2022) posits that leaders impact the organization's success by inspiring followers to achieve goals through continuous development, such as training programs.

Inspiring employees throughout the change process emerged as a substantial factor, along with one subtheme: leadership behavior during the change process. Employees are inspired to

perform at a high level because transformational leaders present an inspirational mission beyond self-identity. Leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behavior during the change process increase their followers' commitment to the organization's values because they inspire and motivate their followers by encouraging them to pursue organizational goals rather than self-interest (Buil et al., 2019). Six participants out of 18 (33%) stated they were inspired throughout the change process based on the leadership behavior the leaders demonstrated during the change process. Four participants out of 18 (22%) mentioned training as a development tool that helped prepare them for organizational change. As a result, inspiring employees throughout the change process and preparing them for change significantly impacted the change process among healthcare employees.

Leaders impact the organization's success by inspiring followers to achieve goals through continuous development (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Leadership plays a role in organizational development to encourage and motivate followers to change for the organization to remain sustainable and adaptable to the business environment (Wang, 2022). However, leaders who do not exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, such as *inspirational motivation*, cause negative attitudes toward change, such as resistance due to the lack of capacity to properly prepare their employees for change readiness (Oreg, 2018). Transformational leaders have a significant role in organizational development by encouraging and motivating followers to embrace change while preparing them for the change ahead. Leaders should encourage followers to feel committed to organizational changes because that inspiration will help increase employee commitment and efficiency in the organization.

Recommendations for Practice

Transformational leaders play a significant role in employee performance because they use intrinsic values to motivate followers to achieve higher-level objectives. When motivated employees remain committed to their jobs, they become increasingly efficacious, which makes them competitively advantageous (Donkor, 2021). Transformational leaders adapt through organizational changes and development to change and transform their organization and efficiently deliver superior results (Kucharska & Rebelo, 2022). Such leaders create visions for the future, increase productivity, and build supportive relationships with followers. According to Bass (1999), transformation is about embracing change, which is the essence of transformational leadership.

The first recommendation for practice is for leaders to inspire and motivate their followers by applying transformational leadership theory while implementing organizational changes. Motivation was a key theme that emerged from this study with two subthemes: Individual Consideration and Inspiration. The participants reported feeling motivated through individual consideration and inspiration, which are dimensions of transformational leadership. P11 talked about how understanding the process is motivating, saying, “Understanding the process of how someone does something, I think, really gives you a little bit extra motivation.” P14 voiced similar claims by stating that “Understanding the why behind the changes and how it's improving the process of these exams and improving outcomes has really helped me adapt to the changes and be motivated.” Additionally, a subtheme that emerged from in this study was individual consideration as one of the four dimensions of transformational leadership. P6 focused on emotional needs through individual consideration by stating how “I think the commitment level is through engagement, finding the strengths of employees, like identifying what their

strengths are, and making sure that tasks that are assigned to them align with their strengths.”

P10 also noted that a form of individual consideration is using a mentorship style to coach others.” Burns’ transformational leadership theory determines a relationship between leaders and followers using four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1999).

Idealized Influence

The first dimension of transformational leadership theory is *idealized influence*, which is a dimension of transformational leadership that connects vision and goals that stimulate followers and develop psychological capital (Shah et al., 2023). Additionally, idealized influences are role model leaders with extraordinary capabilities who model high principles of ethical conduct (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). Leaders who have idealized influences focus closely on the needs of their followers and avoid using authority as a power of personal interest. Transformational leaders with idealized influences gain trust and respect from followers who internalize their high morals and ethical standards, influencing them to follow a line of action by leading by example (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). If leaders lead by example during organizational change, followers will be positively influenced and motivated to maintain a high level of performance during the change process. In this regard, transformational leaders inspire others to increase their commitment through high ethical standards.

Inspirational Motivation

The second dimension of transformational leadership theory, *inspirational motivation*, describes leaders as those who can inspire followers to commit to a vision by fostering a sense of purpose (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders use inspiration and motivation to achieve future goals and foresee obstacles that can potentially hinder the

organization's vision. Inspirational motivation is the leader's ability to influence others to perform duties beyond expectation (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Transformational leaders can motivate and inspire their followers to go beyond the call of duty by articulating a clear perspective of change and encouraging them to have the same motivation to fulfill organizational goals. Leaders should encourage followers to feel committed to the vision because that inspiration will help increase employee commitment and efficiency in the organization (Wang, 2022). Committed individuals tend to improve their self-interest by performing with a purpose rather than operating with resistance. When leaders can motivate their followers, it provides a platform for excellence driven by positive behavior and intellectual stimulation. Such leaders inspire their subordinates to advance their intellectual levels to pursue higher achievements for positive organizational change.

Intellectual Stimulation

The third dimension of Burns' (1978) seminal work is *intellectual stimulation*, which describes leaders as encouraging and inspiring their followers to be innovative. Transformational leaders who intellectually stimulate their followers encourage them to meet the high-performance demands of organizational change by adjusting to changing demands and exploring new learning opportunities and innovative ways of thinking (Jun & Lee, 2023). That intellectual stimulation convinces the followers of their capacity to contribute to organizational goals, which increases self-confidence (Susilo, 2018). Transformational leadership has been linked to individual performance and innovative behavior, which influences employee commitment to change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Wang, 2022). The dimension of intellectual stimulation, encompassed with a transformational leadership style, can increase acceptance of change and the confidence level to drive the achievement of exceptional future organizational goals. As a result,

transformational leaders effectively accomplish business goals and visions by exhibiting intellectual stimulation.

Individual Consideration

The last dimension of transformational leadership theory is *individualized consideration*, in which the leader focuses on the follower's needs and how they impact the overall goal (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Bass, 2009). Transformational leaders use individual considerations to recognize the desires that drive the followers and use those motivations to provide growth opportunities. Leaders who demonstrate individual consideration foster supportive relationships with a mentorship style to coach their followers and maximize their potential by using their strengths (Bass, 1999). A transformational leader also focuses on the individual needs of their followers by acknowledging that everyone is unique, and their engagement positively influences organizational outcomes (Bakker et al., 2023). Therefore, when enacting transformational leadership behaviors such as individual consideration, leaders are more likely to identify their followers' strengths.

The second recommendation for practice is for organizational leaders to follow each step of Kurt Lewin's change model when enforcing change, to understand organizational change behavior, and ensure a successful outcome to change. Kurt Lewin suggests that any interaction affecting the group dynamic also shapes individual behavior and organizational changes (Crosby, 2022). Understanding organizational change behavior entails leadership involvement in the change process. The following participants expressed their involvement as leaders: P6 expressed that there was a positive change within the organization, "By putting that team together to work collaboratively." P9 further elaborates on leadership involvement, stating that "I think sometimes when they know the why behind it, specifically the why we changed the SHA's and knowing

that I am here and that we are willing to help them has really helped get them to focus.” The three stages of Kurt Lewin’s change model describe change as an approach to understanding organizational change behavior during the change process. The first stage of Kurt Lewin’s change model is the unfreeze stage, which describes the process of change as the preparation phase that explains why the change is necessary and how it is profitable (Galli, 2018). The unfreeze stage is significant for managing organizational change because this phase helps leaders prepare their followers for the change. The second stage of Kurt Lewin’s model of change is the change phase, where the transition occurs. During the change phase, organizational leaders communicate the change process with their followers to help them understand the proposed change. The last stage of Kurt Lewin’s change model is the refreeze stage, which is the stage where the change has been accepted. In the refreeze phase, change is implemented by the leaders and embraced by the entire organization (Galli, 2018). During the refreeze stage, the organization returns to the typical routine in a stable environment. Stability will help leaders increase employees’ confidence levels during organizational change and build their morale and performance (Saira et al., 2021).

The third recommendation for practice is for leaders to model change behavior during the change process. Leaders who are role models have the capabilities to model high principles of ethical conduct (Bass, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). P6 spoke from a leadership perspective on how they improved commitment during transformation change through modeling change behavior, saying, “I think you have to model what you want to see employees doing, so if you are someone who wants to make sure that you are creating a teamwork type of environment, then you have to be willing and able to do teamwork type activities. So, if an employee needs some assistance and you're able to provide that type of assistance, you as a leader are willing to do what you have to

do to make sure that the job gets done.” P13 further elaborated by stating that as a leader, “I think showing someone a process or a way and then showing the benefits of that process is very important.” P13 also said, “I think that if you can win the person over to your way of thinking or to your process or to your plan, I think it's a better way than dictating it.” As a result, leaders who are role models teach their employees how to manage change while involving them in the decision-making of change implementation (Chis-Manolache, 2022). Role modeling behaviors positively impact employee commitment to organizational change, which is essential because dedicated staff have less intent to resign from their role.

The fourth recommendation for practice is to fully prepare employees for change by offering training and development. Leaders impact the organization's success by inspiring followers to achieve goals through continuous development, such as training programs (Ling-Hui Yang, 2022). Four participants out of 18 (22%) (P1, P8, P13 and P18) cited that providing training was helpful in their development during the change. P1 mentioned running trials as a form of development and a way to prepare employees for the change, citing, “We always do two-week or three-week trials, and after the two or three-week trial, we re-evaluate.” P8 said, “We were given training prior to and explained how the process would work and that it would take a certain amount of time.” P13 stated that “Training programs and training programs we had to read” helped prepare them for change. P18 also reflects that “I did a lot of the training and a lot of times, the management leaders would ask me and other peers that I work with, to ensure that they had the exact information.” Equipping employees with the essential skills, knowledge, and resources improves their capacity to perform effectively in new roles, systems, and processes (Rachmad, 2022).

Recommendations for Future Research

In terms of sample size, a recommendation is for future researchers to expand the demographics of the research study. This study used 18 participants from North Carolina, which included eight participants from the leader group and 10 participants from the employee group. Expanding the demographic area beyond North Carolina will create a more robust study population that could provide more information on how transformational change improves employee commitment. In addition, the sample size only includes employees who have worked at their employer for at least six months. Therefore, the sample size was not generalizable to the population of all employees who have worked in a healthcare organization for less than 6 months.

A second recommendation is for future research is to explore how individual commitment influences change at an organizational level. Change can be examined from various perspectives and includes organizational or individual effects in terms of organizational achievements. The change process must be well-established and implemented for change to be advantageous at the organizational and individual levels (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Individual behavior and motivational factors are critical to the success of organizational changes. If transformational changes are not understood individually, they affect an organization entirely (Faupeel & Süß, 2019). Examining the effects of change on an individual level will help to determine a link between individual commitment and change at an organizational level.

The third recommendation for future research is to examine how communication impacts the change process within healthcare organizations. Transformational leaders use their confidence and effective communication to increase work morale, contributing to job commitment (Kim & Shin, 2019). Engaging employees in the change process involves open

communication about the change that will occur and eliminates the fear of the unknown. During times of change and uncertainty, employees expect open and honest communication from their leaders. Leaders must communicate what they know about the change, including when it will occur and how it will positively affect the organization in the long term (Yue et al., 2019). Communication was an emerging theme in this study, which revealed that open communication and effective communication increased employee's commitment levels during change.

Finally, examining alternative research methods, such as mixed methods that combine qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, could provide a more integral perspective of the topic, permitting the triangulation of data and a more meticulous understanding of how transformational leadership behaviors can be optimized to increase and improve employee commitment during the change process. Integrating a mixed-methods approach would allow researchers to attain the profundity of individual experiences and the scope of patterns throughout larger populations, offering a more credible and comprehensive analysis. A mixed-methods study would capture the overall complexity of issues surrounding the cause of employee resistance. Incorporating this approach can help identify the underlying factors that explain why the lack of transformational leadership causes resistance to change and decreased employee commitment.

Conclusion

The problem addressed in this study was the resistance to change and decreased employee commitment which resulted from a lack of transformational leadership during change implementation (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Many organizations need help to reach their objectives when implementing change, and leaders have shifted the dynamics of successful change (Ramos et al., 2022). Employees significantly impact the change process, as organizational changes play a significant role in the variations of their work routines (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). Individual behavior and motivational factors are critical to the success of organizational changes. If transformational changes are not understood individually, it affects an organization entirely (Faupel & Süß, 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals. Effective transformational change and employee commitment increase employees' openness to innovation and mitigate resistance to change (Peng et al., 2021). Some challenges organizations experience are a lack of leadership capacity during change implementation and employee change resistance (Engida et al., 2022). Transformational leaders who understand when to facilitate change efforts are more prone to boost employee acceptance. Therefore, examining the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment, and organizational change behaviors was logical for this study, as resistance to change hinders employee commitment during change implementation in the workplace (Oreg, 2018). The three research questions translated the problem into specific queries to help identify issues related to employee commitment and resistance to change.

This qualitative case study explored how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. This study highlighted various ways healthcare leaders impact the change process. Furthermore, this study discovered suggestions for healthcare organizations and their leadership to focus on specific organizational change behaviors while implementing changes. The findings revealed that communication, collaboration in the decision-making process, and motivation are key factors in increasing employee commitment. Leaders who serve as role models during the change process and employee involvement in the change process are essential for improving employee commitment. This study also found that inspiring employees throughout the change process and preparing them for change are significant ways leaders can impact the change process. Leaders should demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors when implementing change to improve and increase employee commitment throughout the change process. By focusing on these strategies, healthcare leaders can foster supportive relationships and encourage innovation within the organization. James MacGregor Burns' transformational leadership theory and Kurt Lewin's change management model highlight the significance of transformational leadership behaviors and the critical role of leadership and employee involvement in organizational change.

A strong positive correlation aligns with the existing literature, which shows that transformational leaders drive the success of organizational change and commitment by communicating a clear vision of organizational goals (Henricks et al., 2020). There was also a strong correlation between transformational leadership and individual performance and innovative behavior, which influences employee commitment to change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Wang, 2022). Employees trust their leaders who demonstrate supportive

behaviors, such as inspiration and involvement during the change process, which leads to employee commitment (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). This research was warranted because neither Kurt Lewin's change model nor Burns' Transformational Leadership Theory thoroughly investigates how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors.

Recommendations for future research include expanding the study population by including additional demographic areas beyond North Carolina. A second recommendation is for future research to examine how individual commitment influences change at an organizational level, as change at the individual level will help determine the link between individual commitment and organizational change. Another recommendation for future research is to examine how communication impacts the change process within healthcare organizations, as many employees reported that communication was a factor in increasing their job commitment. Finally, another recommendation is to employ a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to provide a more comprehensive perspective on how transformational leadership behaviors can be optimized to increase and improve employee commitment during the change process.

This qualitative research study aimed to explore how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors. This study is critical because resistance to change and decreased employee commitment result from a lack of transformational leadership during change implementation (Heim & Sardar-Drenda, 2021). The findings of this research study add to the literature on transformational leadership and the impact on employee commitment and the change process. By exploring these interactions, the study provides beneficial awareness into theories such as transformational leadership theory to enhance

followers' commitment, performance, and motivation for positive change. This research examines the critical roles of communication, collaboration, motivation, and inspiration in how leaders foster supportive relationships with employees during the change process. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of understanding how transformational leadership behaviors increase and improve employee commitment to change.

This study provided a clear message for healthcare leaders that demonstrating transformational leadership behavior while implementing changes in the workplace can be an influential strategy to address the challenges of employee resistance to change and decreased employee commitment during the change process. By focusing on employee commitment and organizational change behaviors, leaders can inspire followers to commit to a vision by fostering a sense of purpose, which is vital for balancing the complexity of the healthcare systems. Additionally, as the healthcare system evolves, adopting transformational leadership principles could position healthcare organizations to increase employee openness to innovations and mitigate resistance to change. Therefore, embracing transformational leadership is not just a suggestion but a requisite for healthcare organizations to sustain successful organizational change for the years and decades to come.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



9388 Lightwave Ave.
San Diego, CA 92123
irb@nu.edu

Notice of Exemption
September 20, 2024

To: Porschia Robinson

Project Title: A Qualitative Case Study on Examining Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Employee Commitment

NU IRB Number: IRB-FY23-24-698

Modification Determination: Exempt from further review 45 CFR 46.101

Status: Active - Research activities may begin as of September 20, 2024

Dear Porschia Robinson:

The study referenced above has been reviewed by the National University IRB. The IRB has determined the proposed modification to your research is exempt from further review under 45 CFR 46.101, which means you will not need to renew your study and may begin your study effective immediately. However, if you find the need to change your study in any way, you will need to submit a modification to the IRB prior to implementing the changes. This will allow the IRB to determine whether or not the study still meets exemption criteria.

Please review your Post Approval Responsibilities here: [Approved Documents Guidelines](#)

For any questions regarding your protocol, please reach out to the IRB at irb@nu.edu.

Sincerely,

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Question 1: Are you 18 years or older?

- Yes
- No

Demographic Question 2: Do you work at a healthcare organization in North Carolina?

- Yes
- No

Demographic Question 3: Do you have at least six months of work experience at the organization?

- Yes
- No

Demographic Question: How many years of experience?

- 1 – 3 years
- 4 – 6 years
- Over 7 years

Demographic Question 5: What is your level of education?

- High School Diploma
- Undergraduate degree
- Graduate degree
- Other

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Leader Group

Before interview:

Hello, _____ . Thank you for your participation in this _____ study examining _____. I just want to take a few minutes to review the informed consent document before we begin.

Share the informed consent document on the screen using Zoom or In-Person. Please read through each section.

Ask participant if they have any questions or concerns about the informed consent document. Remind participant that their personal information will not be shared, and participation is voluntary and confidential.

Request permission if the interview will be audio, video or digitally recorded. Also inform the interviewee if you plan to take notes during the interview.

- The interview process should take approximately 30 minutes.
- The purpose of the study is to examine how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals.
- The interview structure will include notetaking.
- Necessary Terms to know:
 1. **Transformational Leadership:** Focus on change and motivate employees during the change process.
 2. **Idealized Influence:** Internalize high morals and ethical standards.
 3. **Inspirational Motivation:** Inspire followers to commit to organizational goals.
 4. **Intellectual Stimulation:** Simulate others to be creative.
 5. **Individual Consideration:** Attend to follower's emotional needs.
- Ask the interviewee if they have questions before beginning.

During the Interview:

- Interview Questions
 1. As a leader, how do you influence the commitment level of the employees?

2. What type of transformational leadership behaviors do you believe increase employee commitment?
 3. How have you experienced an increase in commitment while implementing organizational change?
 4. When was a time you felt that the employees were less committed due to a change within the organization?
 5. How do you feel transformational change can improve employee commitment?
 6. When did you experience an improvement in the employee's commitment level during transformational change?
 7. When was the last time you implemented change within the organization?
 8. How did the transformational change impact the employee's commitment?
 9. What ways do leaders impact the change process?
 10. What was your experience during the change process from a leader's perspective?
 11. How were the employees impacted by your decision to make organizational changes?
 12. How did you fully prepare the employees for the change process?
- Ask Follow up questions, if needed

After the Interview:

- Reiterate that this is a confidential interview.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions or comments.
- Participants will be sent the interview transcripts for member-checking the day after the interview. Once the participants return their transcripts with any changes or feedback, the interview process will wrap up by thanking the participants for their time and contribution and rewarding a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon via email for participating in the study.
- Discuss dates/times for any follow-up meetings.

Thank participant again for their time and contribution to the study.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Employee Group

Before interview:

Hello, _____ . Thank you for your participation in this _____ study examining _____. I just want to take a few minutes to review the informed consent document before we begin.

Share the informed consent document on the screen using Zoom or In-Person. Please read through each section.

Ask participant if they have any questions or concerns about the informed consent document. Remind participant that their personal information will not be shared, and participation is voluntary and confidential.

Request permission if the interview will be audio, video or digitally recorded. Also inform the interviewee if you plan to take notes during the interview.

- The interview process should take approximately 30 minutes.
- The purpose of the study is to examine how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals.
- The interview structure will include notetaking.
- Necessary Terms to know:
 1. **Transformational Leadership:** Focus on change and motivate employees during the change process.
 2. **Idealized Influence:** Internalize high morals and ethical standards.
 3. **Inspirational Motivation:** Inspire followers to commit to organizational goals.
 4. **Intellectual Stimulation:** Simulate others to be creative.
 5. **Individual Consideration:** Attend to follower's emotional needs.
- Ask the interviewee if they have questions before beginning.

During the Interview:

- Interview Questions
 1. How do transformational leaders have a significant influence on your commitment level?

2. What type of transformational leadership behaviors do you believe increase employee commitment?
3. How have you experienced an increase in commitment during the organizational change?
4. When was a time you felt less committed due to a change within the organization?
5. How do you feel transformational change can improve employee commitment?
6. When did you experience an improvement in your commitment level during transformational change?
7. When was the last time you experienced transformational change within the organization?
8. How did the transformational change impact your commitment?
9. What ways do leaders impact the change process?
10. What was your experience during the change process?
11. How were you impacted by your leader's decision to make organizational changes?
12. How did your leader fully prepare you for the change process?

Ask Follow up questions, if needed

After the Interview:

- Reiterate that this is a confidential interview.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions or comments.
- Participants will be sent the interview transcripts for member-checking the day after the interview. Once the participants return their transcripts with any changes or feedback, the interview process will wrap up by thanking the participants for their time and contribution and rewarding a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon via email for participating in the study.
- Discuss dates/times for any follow-up meetings.

Thank participant again for their time and contribution to the study.

Appendix E: Leader Group Interview Questions

RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a leader, how do you influence the commitment level of the employees? 2. What type of transformational leadership behaviors do you believe increase employee commitment? 3. How have you experienced an increase in commitment while implementing organizational change? 4. When was a time you felt that the employees were less committed due to a change within the organization?
RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How do you feel transformational change can improve employee commitment? 6. When did you experience an improvement in the employee's commitment level during transformational change? 7. When was the last time you implemented change within the organization? 8. How did the transformational change impact the employee's commitment?

<p>RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. What ways do leaders impact the change process?10. What was your experience during the change process from a leader's perspective?11. How were the employees impacted by your decision to make organizational changes?12. How did you fully prepare the employees for the change process?
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Appendix F: Employee Group Interview Questions

RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?

RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do transformational leadership behaviors increase employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do transformational leaders have a significant influence on your commitment level? 2. What type of transformational leadership behaviors do you believe increase employee commitment? 3. How have you experienced an increase in commitment during the organizational change? 4. When was a time you felt less committed due to a change within the organization?
RQ2: How does transformational change improve employee commitment among healthcare administrative professionals?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How do you feel transformational change can improve employee commitment? 6. When did you experience an improvement in your commitment level during transformational change? 7. When was the last time you experienced transformational change within the organization? 8. How did the transformational change impact your commitment?

<p>RQ3: What are ways that healthcare leaders can impact the change process among healthcare administrative employees?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. What ways do leaders impact the change process?10. What was your experience during the change process?11. How were you impacted by your leader's decision to make organizational changes?12. How did your leader fully prepare you for the change process?
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Appendix G: IRB Consent Letter Leader Group

My name is Porschia Robinson, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU).

I'm asking you to take part in a research study about how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals. The name of this research is "A Qualitative Case Study on Examining Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Employee Commitment."

You may participate in this research if you meet all of the following criteria:

1. Participants must be 18 years or older.
2. Work in a healthcare organization in North Carolina.
3. Must have supervisory experience for 5 or more employees.
4. Must be in a leadership role for at least six months.

I hope to include 20 people in this research.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Complete a demographic questionnaire.
2. Participate in a 1:1 online interview via Zoom, Skype, or Microsoft Teams for approximately 30 minutes.
3. Review your interview transcript via email for 10-15 minutes.

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- Your age, work experience, and level of education.
- Your experience with transformational leadership behaviors.
- The effects transformational change has on employee commitment.

Risks: There are minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this research. You can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation at any time.

Benefits: If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this research.

Compensation: After you complete the demographic questionnaire, 1:1 interview, and review the interview transcripts, you will receive a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon via email for participating in the study.

My professional role outside of NU requires me to report suspicion of child or elderly abuse, suspicion of possible harm to self or others, and committed crimes to the appropriate authorities.

Confidentiality: I will keep the records of this study private and take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Each participant will have a right to privacy, including a confidentiality agreement to ensure their identity is protected during and after the research study. The participant's information will be de-identified and securely stored in accordance with IRB requirements. The data will be securely stored for up to three years after completing the study and discarded after the allotted time.

Taking part is voluntary: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may quit at any time.

If you have questions: Please ask any questions you have now.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) via email at irb@nu.edu

Appendix H: IRB Consent Letter Employee Group

My name is Porschia Robinson, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU). I also hold a role as a Practitioner Recruitment Coordinator for Optum.

I'm asking you to take part in a research study about how transformational leadership can improve employee commitment and organizational change behaviors among healthcare administrative professionals. The name of this research is "A Qualitative Case Study on Examining Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Employee Commitment."

You may participate in this research if you meet all of the following criteria:

5. Participants must be 18 years or older.
6. Work in a healthcare organization in North Carolina.
7. Must be an employee with the company for at least six months.

I hope to include 20 people in this research.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

4. Complete a demographic questionnaire.
5. Participate in a 1:1 online interview via Zoom, Skype, or Microsoft Teams for approximately 30 minutes.
6. Review your interview transcript via email for 10-15 minutes.

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- Your age, work experience, and level of education.
- Your experience with transformational leadership behaviors.
- The effects transformational change has on employee commitment.

Risks: There are minimal foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this research. You can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation at any time.

Benefits: If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this research.

Compensation: After you complete the demographic questionnaire, 1:1 interview, and review the interview transcripts, you will receive a \$30 gift card from Walmart or Amazon via email for participating in the study.

My professional role outside of NU requires me to report suspicion of child or elderly abuse, suspicion of possible harm to self or others, and committed crimes to the appropriate authorities.

Confidentiality: I will keep the records of this study private and take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Each participant will have a right to privacy, including a confidentiality agreement to ensure their identity is protected during and after the research study. The participant's information will be de-identified and securely stored in accordance with IRB requirements. The data will be securely stored for up to three years after completing the study and discarded after the allotted time.

Taking part is voluntary: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may quit at any time.

If you have questions: Please ask any questions you have now.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) via email at irb@nu.edu